

# **Crime Prevention and Community Safety for Children and Youth in Canada**

© 2011 University of Victoria  
The moral rights of the authors are asserted.

Published by University of Victoria  
University of Victoria  
McPherson Library  
3800 Finnerty Road  
Victoria, BC V8P 5C2  
[scholcom@uvic.ca](mailto:scholcom@uvic.ca)

Printed and bound in Canada by University of Victoria  
Cover and book design by Kold Design

Crime prevention and community safety for children and youth in Canada / edited by Michel Vallée and Tullio Caputo.

Includes bibliographical references.  
Also issued in electronic format.  
ISBN 978-1-55058-441-7

1. Crime prevention--Canada. 2. Youth--Canada--Social conditions.  
3. Juvenile delinquency--Canada--Prevention. 4. Juvenile justice,  
Administration of--Canada. I. Vallée, Michel II. Caputo, Tullio, 1950-

HV7434.C3C75 2011 364.4'0971 C2011-905270-9

This publication is licensed under a Creative Commons License, Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative 3.0 Unported Canada: see [www.creativecommons.org](http://www.creativecommons.org). The text may be reproduced for non-commercial purposes, provided that credit is given to the original author(s).

Please contact Copyright Office, University of Victoria at [copyrite@uvic.ca](mailto:copyrite@uvic.ca) for permission beyond the usage outlined in the Creative Commons license.

**Crime Prevention and Community Safety  
for Children and Youth in Canada**

edited by  
**Michel Vallée and Tullio Caputo**



© 2011 University of Victoria

## **THANK YOU**

We would like to thank James Allen, Editorial Associate for the *International Journal of Child Youth and Family Studies*, for making this volume possible through his hard work and dedication. We greatly appreciate his commitment to quality and thoroughness and his tireless attention to detail and wish to acknowledge how much we value his contribution to this book.

The Sponsoring Editors,  
Sibylle Artz and Jennifer White

# CONTENTS

## INTRODUCTION

1 REFLECTING ON CRIME PREVENTION AND YOUTH JUSTICE IN CANADA

## CHAPTER 1

7 CRIME PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY SAFETY: A CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW  
9 Crime and its Prevention in Canada  
12 Crime Prevention Strategies  
19 Conclusion: Toward a Comprehensive Crime Prevention Strategy  
22 References

## CHAPTER 2

25 AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF CRIME PREVENTION INITIATIVES IN CANADA: A FEDERAL PERSPECTIVE  
26 The Early Years: Up to the Mid-1960s  
30 The Police-Community Relations Era: Mid-1960s to Mid-1970s  
31 The Community Crime Prevention Era: Mid-1970s to Mid-1980s  
35 The Policy Development Era: Mid-1980s to Mid-1990s – Toward a Comprehensive Federal Policy on Crime Prevention  
40 The New Directions: Mid-1990s to The Present Day – Toward a National Policy on Crime Prevention  
47 Discussion and Conclusion  
49 Endnotes  
49 References

## CHAPTER 3

53 AN EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH TO COMMUNITY SAFETY  
55 What We Know About the Causes of Crime and Delinquency  
57 Evidence-Based Crime Prevention: What Do We Know?  
69 Conclusions  
72 Endnotes  
73 References

## CHAPTER 4

79 CREATING SAFER COMMUNITIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH: THE ROLE OF THE POLICE IN CRIME PREVENTION  
79 Crime Prevention Strategies  
82 Recent Studies of Crime Prevention in Canada  
88 The Role of the Police in Crime Prevention: The Perspective of Canadian Police Officers  
93 Conclusions  
96 References

## CHAPTER 5

**97 DEVELOPMENTAL PATHWAYS TOWARDS CRIME PREVENTION:  
EARLY INTERVENTION MODELS**

99 Trends in the Early Intervention Domain  
100 Developmental Prevention  
100 Ecological Development Models  
101 Interventions: Reducing Risks and Bolstering Protective Factors  
101 The Importance of Early Relationships  
103 Early Risk and Resilience  
105 Developmental Pathways Within Early Intervention Models  
107 Recent Canadian Evaluations of the Healthy Families Program  
109 Conclusions: Process Analysis  
113 Linkages Between Different Programs and Developmental Levels or Transition Points  
114 References

## CHAPTER 6

**119 MEANINGFUL INTERVENTION WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH:  
A REFLECTION ON TEN YEARS OF INQUIRY**

119 Current Thinking  
121 Current Responses to Children and Youth and Their Effects  
124 Promising Practices and Approaches for Effectively Meeting the Needs of Children, Youth, and the Community  
127 Ways of Establishing or Enhancing Partnerships  
129 Working With, not For or on Behalf of  
130 Endnotes  
130 References

## CHAPTER 7

**135 VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND THE CANADIAN GIRL CHILD**

136 A Social and Historical Context of the Girl Child in Canada  
138 The Problem of Gender Neutrality  
138 Differential Gender-Based Socialization  
139 Toward a Definition of Violence  
140 The Current Research  
141 Theoretical and Conceptual Underpinnings  
142 Research Methodology  
143 Findings  
143 Doing Research From the Ground Up  
144 Gender-Neutral Policies and Legislation  
146 Programmatic Considerations  
147 Conclusion  
148 References  
151 Appendix

## **CHAPTER 8**

**159 ILL HEALTH AND DISCRIMINATION: THE DOUBLE JEOPARDY FOR YOUTH IN PUNITIVE JUSTICE SYSTEMS**

160 The Condemnation of Age and Race  
161 Scapegoating Youth: A Story of Race and "Justice"  
163 Throwaway Youth: Life on the Streets  
166 Youth Declared as "At Risk"  
169 A Story of an At-Risk Society  
170 Healthy Contexts  
172 Alternative Schools, Health, and Justice: Won Ska Cultural School  
174 Education as a Vehicle for Holistic Healing: Cote First Nations  
176 Conclusion  
178 References

## **CHAPTER 9**

**181 THE UNTAPPED POTENTIAL IN OUR COMMUNITIES TO ASSIST YOUTH ENGAGED IN RISKY BEHAVIOUR**

184 Protection for Children from Home and School  
187 Extending our Prevention Programs for Youth to the Community of Older Adults  
191 Involving "High-Risk" Youth in Prevention Programs  
192 Peer Helping Programs for Youth "At Risk"?  
193 Practical Application of Peer Helping with Youth at Risk  
195 Conclusion  
197 References

## **CHAPTER 10**

**207 ADDRESSING THE PHENOMENON OF GANGS**

207 The Youth and Street Gangs Project: History, Basic Principles, and Major Developments of a Prevention Project Based on Community Social Development  
208 The Youth and Street Gangs Project  
209 The Origins of the Youth and Street Gangs Project  
211 Theoretical Principles  
213 Knowledge Developed on the Phenomenon of Gangs Within the Framework of our Research  
214 Recommendations for Action and Prevention  
216 Initiatives to Follow Up on the Project  
218 The Message  
221 Conclusion  
223 Endnotes  
223 References

## **EPILOGUE**

**227 CRIME PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY SAFETY: SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH**



# INTRODUCTION

## Reflecting on Crime Prevention and Youth Justice in Canada

Michel Vallée and Tullio Caputo, Editors

Over the past several decades, discussion in Canada about crime and victimization issues can be characterized by two distinct yet polarized views. On the one hand, we have been influenced by the neo-liberal thinking that has dominated the political discourse of most western nations since the early 1980s. In the area of crime and corrections, this has meant an emphasis on “get tough” measures, harsher punishments, and higher incarceration rates. This type of approach has been especially evident in the United States with its “three strikes” policies and its burgeoning prison population. On the other hand, a growing recognition has emerged among social scientists, service providers, and policy-makers that many of the existing and traditional responses to crime – and other social problems – are ineffective. The experience of the United States is often used as an example since higher incarceration rates there have not translated into a lower crime rate. Those advocating this perspective contend that a social problem such as crime cannot be understood exclusively in terms of individual motivations and culpability. Instead, crime is seen as part of the broader social context. This has led to a focus on community factors and processes and, ultimately, on the social bases of crime.

These competing philosophies and political orientations have led to the emergence of a number of contradictory policies and practices in the area of criminal justice policy. For example, in Canada, the new youth justice legislation attempts to address the concerns of both conservative and progressive critics by being “tougher” on serious and repeat young offenders while promoting less formal, community-based alternatives for youth involved in first time and minor offences. Similarly, the emphasis over the past decade in the law enforcement field has been on community policing, but at the same time, broad new enforcement powers have been granted to the police in order to combat organized crime, outlaw motorcycle gangs, and terrorism. As these examples show, policy-makers have tried to appease the concerns of those favouring a “get tough” approach while simultaneously responding to those who want to address crime as a broader social problem.

An interesting debate has developed within this context with respect to crime prevention. Beginning in the late 1970s, proponents of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) received considerable support for initiatives such as community safety audits. These were intended to identify areas where the built environment increased the opportunity for crime. This approach to crime prevention emerged at a time when there was a growing emphasis on the identification and management of risk. For crime prevention, this resulted in the attempt to reduce the opportunities for crime by altering the physical environment through increased lighting, and the use of access control measures (locks on doors and bars on windows). Individuals

were encouraged to secure themselves and their property against potential victimization. These CPTED measures – known as situational crime prevention – promoted target hardening on the one hand and self-policing measures on the other, a precursor to the type of “responsibilization” strategies that would emerge later.

At the same time as these more “reactive” initiatives were appearing, more “proactive” crime prevention approaches also began to gain in popularity. Crime Prevention through Social Development (CPSD), for example, explicitly acknowledged the link between crime and underlying social factors such as poverty, unemployment, racism, sexism, and other forms of social marginalization. A growing body of literature began to document the relationship between youth crime and a variety of contextual variables such as: parental criminality, alcoholism, or substance abuse; family conflict; school failure; delinquent peer associations; and a lack of appropriate educational, recreational, and economic opportunities for youth. The response to these underlying social causes of crime was not more policies or programs aimed at individual offenders but, rather, social development initiatives designed to address the underlying social causes of crime.

Looking back, a number of key developments emerged during this era. First, many sectors within criminal justice began to turn to the “community” for a solution. That is, the community began to be perceived as the source of the problem, the site for intervention and, importantly, a participant in service delivery. From the late 1970s onward, these ideas resulted in the development of and growing support for community policing, community corrections, and community-based alternatives such as restorative justice. This mirrored similar developments in other fields with the introduction of community health, community living, and community schools.

Second, concerns over children and youth became a highly visible public policy issue during this period, which often influenced broader policy developments. In the criminal justice area, these concerns led to an almost continuous process of legislative change and amendment that has persisted for over 30 years. Beginning with a debate over the 78-year-old Juvenile Delinquents Act and its replacement with the Young Offenders Act in 1984, public discussion and debate over youth justice has been at the centre of criminal justice matters in this country.

One of the interesting aspects of both community and childhood is that both concepts have a “taken for granted” quality, yet are difficult to define. There is no simple, widely accepted definition of the concept of community. In fact, this concept is a highly useful policy instrument precisely because of its lack of specificity. Moreover, since it evokes a positive connotation, many observers have invoked it to suit their own needs. The lack of conceptual clarity related to “community” is also there with respect to the concept of childhood. Many scholars have acknowledged the various ways this concept has been used and have begun to explore the consequences that existing “idealized” notions of childhood have for young people. In some contexts, childhood refers to young children. In others, it includes those below the age of majority (defined differently in different countries). Still others have used the concept of childhood to include people from birth to 30 years of age.

The theoretical and conceptual issues surrounding the concepts of community and childhood informed the development of this collection of original essays. We invited a number of recognized experts concerned about crime prevention and community safety for children and youth to submit their original work in this area. The volume begins with two introductory chapters authored by Michel Vallée that provide a conceptual overview of crime prevention and community safety in Canada. In Chapter 3, Rick Linden presents a rationale for supporting an evidence-based approach to crime prevention. This is followed in Chapter 4 by a consideration of the role of the police in relation to crime prevention by Tullio Caputo and Michel Vallée.

The remaining chapters examine the response of the child welfare, health, and youth justice systems to issues surrounding the safety, health, and well-being of children and youth. In Chapter 5, Mike Boyes, Joseph P. Hornick, and Nancy Ogden discuss the results of their evaluation of a sample of Healthy Families early intervention projects. They note that while crime prevention models have included early intervention as a component, the incorporation of a development perspective is new. The development perspective provides insights into longitudinal causal mechanisms related to the risk of involvement in criminal behaviour. They note the importance of identifying risk and protective factors but argue that we must go beyond simply identifying these to developing a greater understanding of the multiple contexts in which development occurs.

Boyes, Hornick, and Ogden then define what they mean by developmental prevention and consider how this concept can be used in crime prevention. They examine a number of specific programs that address such factors as stress, family functioning, and child development. The Healthy Start program in Hawaii is discussed in this context. They emphasize the fact that longitudinal reviews of developmental and early intervention approaches have been shown to be very effective.

In Chapter 6, Sibylle Artz, Diana Nicholson, Elaine Halsall, and Susan Larke draw on a number of studies they have conducted that focus on the perspectives, experiences, and needs of children and youth. These include a project focusing on the development of a gender-sensitive tool for needs assessment as well as a project that examined the experiences of children and youth with school and community-based violence. They note that conducting needs assessments and matching needs to services is difficult, pointing out that needs are often confused with risks and that the child welfare system is paying attention to assessing and reducing risk. They argue that this puts additional emphasis on the process of conducting appropriate needs assessments.

Artz, Nicholson, Halsall, and Larke go on to review four key policy documents that address current responses to children and youth. They discuss the following factors that have contributed to the success of interventions: positive partnerships; working with, not for, children and youth; exploring promising practices; and employing caring and collaboration approaches. Their research shows that the programs they examined have been extremely successful, contributing among other things, to a 40% to 50% reduction in school-based violence. The development of a gender-sensitive needs assessment tool was seen as extremely important. They also stress the need for a participatory approach to research and point out that despite cuts in funding many of the projects they have been

involved with continue to work effectively because of the efforts and commitment of those involved.

In Chapter 7, Yasmin Jiwani, Helene Berman, and Catherine Ann Cameron present the results of their work as part of the Alliance of Five Research Centres on Violence. Their focus was on violence and the Canadian girl child. They begin with a discussion of the social and historical context of the girl child and then describe the methodological and theoretical basis of their research. They present the details of their findings as well as a discussion of the policy and programming implications of their work. Jiwani, Berman, and Cameron argue that unless policies, programs, and practices are especially gender sensitive, they may not be hitting the mark. Indeed, they caution us about generic violence prevention programs.

Jiwani, Berman, and Cameron conclude by noting that the research undertaken by the Alliance of Five Research Centres on Violence shows an urgent need to direct funding and services to address the situation of girls in this country, especially as this relates to protecting them from violence. They provide a detailed and extensive set of recommendations, addressed to all levels of government, which provide insight and direction for future developments in this area.

In Chapter 8, Bernard Schissel discusses the consequences for young people in the criminal justice system. He argues that children and youth are treated as political and economic scapegoats in our society. In particular, he states that this scapegoating is racialized with serious consequences for African-Canadian, Aboriginal, and other non-white children and youth. To support this claim, he presents his research on young offender files including a subset of young people, mainly street youth from Saskatoon, charged for being involved in the sex trade. According to Schissel, the results show extremely negative consequences for these young people at the hands of the justice system. Schissel concludes by asking how powerful people end up stigmatizing and controlling young people either intentionally or unintentionally. The impact of such actions is especially significant for youth living on the margins of society such as street youth. He states that the actions of the powerful represent a moral condemnation of these young people, identifying them as less deserving and redeemable than others. He argues that changes to the justice system must be based on a profound understanding of the impact that poverty, racism, and marginality have on youth.

Next, Susan Reid, in Chapter 9, presents a detailed review of some of the risk and protective factors discussed in the literature on youth crime and victimization. She argues that if we are serious about supporting resilient youth, we should tap into the potential that exists in our communities. According to Reid, we are segregated into age specific categories, which tend to isolate us from each other and may lead to mistrust and even to hostility. She explores how making connections with others could help high-risk youth address their own risk factors and increase their resiliency. More specifically, she looks at the potential for reducing the distance between young people and older adults. She also explores the possibility of involving high-risk youth in working with other young people, based on her work on peer helping done in conjunction with the National Youth In Care Network. Reid stresses that when we attempt to intervene in the lives of young people, we should strive to reinforce the bonds that exist between young people, their siblings, friends, and adults in their communities.

Finally, in Chapter 10, Sylvie Hamel, Marie-Marthe Cousineau, and Sophie Léveillé, in collaboration with Martine Vézina and Julie Savignac, focus on youth involvement in gangs. They discuss their experience with the Youth and Street Gangs Project, which was based on a participatory research approach. This project responded to youth gangs through a community-based crime prevention program using a social development strategy. Community groups and young people in three communities in the Greater Montréal area participated in pilot projects. Hamel, Cousineau, Léveillé, Vézina, and Savignac provide a detailed account of how this project was conceived and developed, including a consideration of the methodology used and the theoretical models employed. The authors' experience in this project highlights a number of key issues involved in the justice system response to youth, especially with respect to gang members who represent a serious challenge to community safety.



# CHAPTER 1

## CRIME PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY SAFETY: A CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW

Michel Vallée

**Abstract:** The author explores some of the factors that have influenced the public debate in Canada over issues of crime and victimization, particularly with reference to children and youth as both perpetrators and victims. Focusing specifically on various approaches to crime prevention, he discusses some of the key elements of a comprehensive crime prevention strategy and argues that for such a strategy to be meaningful and effective, it should be a community-based social development approach.

This chapter explores some of the factors that have influenced public discourse in Canada surrounding crime and victimization, focusing specifically on an assessment of various crime prevention strategies and approaches. Building on this analysis, some of the key elements of a comprehensive crime prevention strategy are discussed. Finally, I consider why a comprehensive crime prevention strategy based on a social development approach has the greatest potential to affect crime and victimization.

As noted in the Introduction, the papers in this collection present a multidisciplinary analysis of crime prevention with a particular emphasis on the safety, health, and well-being of children and youth. This emphasis was the focus of the policy forum upon which this volume is based, and was selected through a series of discussions and negotiations with senior federal government officials from several departments who participated in the event. While these policy-makers shared a general interest in crime prevention programs and strategies, a broad consensus emerged during negotiations with these federal representatives that the focus of our discussion on crime prevention should be on the experiences of children and youth.

Both the research literature and public opinion polls in Canada reflect the importance of addressing the experiences of children and youth as both victims and perpetrators of crime. For example, an Earnscliffe survey (2000) reported results that are typical of public opinion in Canada regarding youth involvement in crime. This survey showed that crime, and youth crime in particular, is near the top of the public agenda. An EKOS survey (2004) confirms these findings, suggesting a continued perception by Canadians that crime is increasing and that crime involving youth is increasing more dramatically than other crimes. In fact, three-quarters of Canadians perceive that violent crimes and property crimes committed by youth, as well as school-based violence, are increasing.

While youth crime and victimization have garnered considerable public concern, children and youth have also become the focus of much crime prevention activity

in Canada. A study of crime prevention practices in 29 Canadian communities by Jamieson, Beals, Lalonde & Associates (2000) revealed that, "In all 29 communities, youth and children were identified as the major program beneficiaries" (p. 5). Indeed, many of the programs identified during this study involved the police or schools in educational, recreational, or mentoring activities aimed at children and youth. While most communities had traditional situational programs and activities, the majority of the activities identified were "Crime Prevention through Social Development" (CPSD) in orientation. In most communities, the police were the main group participating in both situational crime prevention and CPSD.

Similar results were reported by Jamieson and Hart (2003) in their review of promising crime prevention practices in Canada. In their compendium, fully 30 of the 39 programs identified focused on activities aimed at children and youth. Another example of the importance of children and youth in the area of crime prevention is a report by Arcand and Cullen (2004). This study examined the role of the police in Crime Prevention through Social Development. Of the 54 programs identified in this report, 68.5% had an educational focus while 26% involved recreational activities. Most of these programs were designed for children and youth.

The focus on children and youth in the area of crime prevention reflects a wide range of societal concerns and beliefs about crime and victimization. For example, Canadians generally favour prevention over punishment for youth. This is illustrated in the EKOS survey report (2004):

For the majority of Canadians, providing young people at risk of offending with opportunities (e.g., training, rehabilitation or recreational programs) is by far the preferred approach to crime prevention. Alternatively, attempting to deter youth from committing crimes through increased law enforcement methods such as "tougher sentences" is favoured by about one in four. The perception that opportunities are the best way to prevent youth crime has increased from 68 per cent in 2000 to 73 per cent in 2003. (p. 24)

Identifying children and youth as both "victims" and "villains" reflects many of the dominant cultural stereotypes surrounding the concept of "childhood". On the one hand, these stereotypes portray children as innocent and passive victims who need guidance and nurturing. On the other hand, some children and youth are identified as potentially dangerous and criminal actors in need of punishment and control. The "victim" imagery is based on the notion that children need guidance and protection from the dangers of adult life. This view defines children and youth as not fully developed, offering the potential of successful socialization or even rehabilitation. Many programs aimed at children and youth are based on just such a premise, that is, children and youth can be educated and made aware of potential dangers (drugs, crime, unsafe sexual activities, etc.). Educational, recreational, and mentoring programs (to name a few) can be designed to encourage the development of pro-social behaviour patterns in the young.

At the same time, enforcement efforts aimed at youth crime, including violence, drugs, and gang activity, respond to people's fear of crime. Indeed, many offenders fall into the 14- to 24-year-old age range confirming societal concerns regarding youth

crime. Attitudes toward prevention and rehabilitation, however, also reflect dominant stereotypes. Given their potential for future growth, general attitudes toward youth that run afoul of the law perceive good candidates for reform and rehabilitation efforts in comparison to adult offenders who are thought to be more set in their ways and therefore less susceptible to change.

In the sections that follow, issues related to crime and its prevention are discussed in a general way, especially with respect to identifying the major types of crime prevention. The relevance of this discussion for the safety, health, and well-being of children and youth is implicit; however, specific reference will be made to the implications of the discussion for children and youth where appropriate.

## Crime and its Prevention in Canada

Over the past decade, neo-liberal thinking has dominated political discourse in most western nations including discussions of law and order. This has stemmed from the influence in the early 1980s of the Reagan Administration in the United States and the Thatcher Government in Britain. In the area of crime and corrections, this has meant an emphasis on “get tough” measures, harsher punishments, and higher incarceration rates. However, despite this focus on a so-called “law and order” approach, there has been a growing recognition by researchers, policy-makers, and service providers alike, that many of the existing traditional responses to crime and victimization are ineffective. For example, there are very real limits to what the criminal justice system can achieve in terms of preventing crime, deterring criminals, or making our homes and communities safer. While the most concrete outcome of Canada’s current approach to crime is an incarceration rate that is among the highest in the world, crime and victimization rates continue to remain high. The limits of the judicial process as a crime prevention tool are also evident when we consider that the criminal courts and the sanctions they provide do not deal with the root causes of crime. Rather, they deal with the situational events surrounding a crime and the offender. A similar argument can be made with respect to the limited effectiveness of correctional treatment and rehabilitation programs. As Gendreau and Ross (1987) note, it is unfortunate that the discussion of treatment effectiveness has become almost dogmatic and influenced by the prevailing political climate. While some correctional programs do have positive preventive effects on some offenders, they cannot be considered as an effective mechanism for preventing crime and victimization in any comprehensive manner.

Interestingly, public perceptions about crime and victimization have not changed much over the past several decades in Canada. The Canadian public continues to see crime as being stable or increasing and, as noted above, believes that youth are responsible. A review of studies and polls describing the views of Canadians confirms this conclusion. For example, an EKOS survey (2004) indicates that a majority of Canadians continue to believe that crime is either at the same level or increasing, but not by as much as in a previous survey (EKOS, 2001). As well, the public is concerned about their children’s safety in schools. On the other hand, Canadians feel safe from property and violent crimes within their own neighbourhoods.

Importantly, however, while the Canadian public sees crime as being an important

issue, they are also aware of the significance of key risk factors related to crime, such as difficulties within families and schools, problems related to drugs and alcohol, and poverty. In fact, in recent surveys, the public has expressed its support for crime prevention initiatives and has endorsed directing greater attention and resources to the “causes” of crime. For example, the EKOS (2004) report notes that by a margin of two to one the public prefers crime prevention to punishment as a primary goal of the criminal justice system. Moreover, three in four Canadians would rather see an approach to youth crime that offers opportunities to get involved in positive activities, such as training and drug rehabilitation, rather than imposing tougher sentences. More specifically, the report states:

Respondents were presented with a hypothetical situation where they were forced to choose between a series of randomly paired choices on how best to reduce crime. The results show that, almost two out of three times, the expansion of literacy and training programs for youth was selected when paired against other options. Further evidence of the public’s preference for proactive solutions to address crime can be found in the support for increasing early childhood intervention, parenting programs, youth recreational activities, and public education programs, which were selected more than half of the time as the most effective form of crime reduction. (EKOS, 2004, p. 36)

In order to identify some key elements of an effective crime prevention strategy, it is important to begin by considering what we mean by “crime prevention”. Harvey, Grimshaw, and Pease (1989) suggest that there are effectively no real boundaries to crime prevention work, and that proponents and practitioners subsume widely divergent practices under the headings of “crime prevention” and “community safety”. Crawford (1998) points out that genuine prevention is inherently difficult to assess. It involves securing a “non-event”. Hastings (1995) suggests that there are three specific tasks in developing a blueprint for prevention. These are: (a) defining the crime problem from the perspective of society, victims, and community; (b) deciding on the appropriate level of intervention (i.e., primary prevention or problem focused, secondary prevention focused on a specific situation or individuals, or tertiary prevention focusing on individuals who have already been involved in an offence); and (c) deciding on the appropriate point of intervention (i.e., the motivation of the offender, the vulnerability of the victim, and the situation or the opportunity that could give rise to the criminal act).

There have been many efforts to classify crime prevention approaches. For example, Lejins (1967) talks about differentiating between the techniques employed in crime prevention activities, for example, punitive prevention or deterrence, corrective prevention or the elimination of criminogenic social conditions, and mechanical prevention or measures to reduce criminal opportunities. Further to this, Crawford (1998) writes, “...in trying to define crime prevention’s conceptual boundaries, we recognize that crime prevention is somewhere between the narrow craft of ‘policing’ and the elephantine and somewhat amorphous processes of social control” (p. 8). Lab (1997) states that crime prevention entails any action designed to reduce the actual level of crime and/or perceived fear of crime. Hastings (1995), however, indicates that prevention should mean a great deal more than better law enforcement.

Definitions of crime prevention, its boundaries, and appropriate conceptualizations remain the subject of intense debate and considerable academic interest. Seeking agreement on a workable definition of crime prevention is not an easy task, nor is trying to determine at what point to intervene and at what level. These are difficult choices to make. Crawford (1998) states that these choices, "...embody assumptions about causes of crime, the nature of social relations and principles of justice, as well as, at the same time they connect with, and are promoted by, political strategies and ideological perspectives" (p. 3).

The nature of prevention strategies can range on a continuum that includes tertiary intervention (e.g., correctional treatment measures) at one end, secondary prevention (e.g., situational crime prevention) in the middle, and primary prevention (e.g., social development) at the other end. Prevention can be multi-dimensional by focusing on all three levels of intervention in an integrated manner. At the same time, crime prevention can be comprehensive and include the health care, child welfare, education, and criminal justice systems, as well as retaining a significant role for the local community. This latter approach emphasizes the need to take a broader look at the root causes of crime and develop a more comprehensive crime prevention strategy.

The House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General (SCJSG) provides strong support for a comprehensive approach to crime prevention in their concluding statement:

The Committee accepts that crime will always be with us in one form or another, and will require police, court, and correctional interventions. At the same time, it believes that our collective response to crime must shift to crime prevention efforts that reduce opportunities for crime and focus increasingly on at-risk young people and on the underlying social and economic factors associated with crime and criminality. This comprehensive approach involves partnerships between governments, criminal justice organizations, and community agencies and groups. As well, it situates the crime problem in a community context and sees its solution as a social question. (Government of Canada, 1993, p. 2)

Do we really know what underlying social and economic factors are associated with crime and criminality? Can we recognize the impact and effects of these factors? Social science research has identified many interrelated factors in the social environment of persistent offenders that contribute to their criminality. A number of witnesses at the 1993 SCJSG hearings emphasized the relationship between the following:

1. Dropping out of school and coming into contact with the juvenile justice system;
2. Illiteracy, school failure, low self-esteem, and crime;
3. Inappropriate disciplinary methods of parents (lack of consistency is the worst) and delinquency;
4. Violent behaviour by young and adult offenders; and
5. Witnessing and/or experiencing physical or sexual abuse as children.

It is clear that there is no single “cause” of crime. Rather, crime is the outcome of the interactions of a constellation of factors that include: poverty, physical and sexual abuse, illiteracy, alcohol abuse, drug abuse, lack of job opportunities for youth, negative peer influence, physiological defects (e.g., FAS/FAE), biological defects (chromosome imbalance, tumours, etc.), low self-esteem, inadequate housing, school failures, unemployment, inequality, and dysfunctional families.

Crawford (1998) also identifies a number of variables that impact crime. In addition to gender (most crimes are committed by men), he discusses the impact of the following: (a) individual personality and behavioural factors, such as hyperactive behaviour in early childhood, impulsiveness, and restlessness; (b) family influences, such as social class, family size, family poverty, lone-parenting, inadequate parenting, physical and sexual abuse, parental conflict and separation; (c) living conditions, such as poor housing and unstable living conditions; (d) disintegration of social supports; (e) school influences, such as poor schooling, bullying, poor educational achievements, truancy, and exclusion from school; (f) peer group pressure, delinquency or having friends who are involved in delinquent activities; and, (g) employment issues, such as a lack of training and unemployment.

## Crime Prevention Strategies

The discussion above demonstrates that many factors and variables have been associated with crime. It also shows that there are numerous strategies or approaches to crime prevention and many ways to categorize and describe them. In the following discussion, I consider the strengths and weaknesses of four key crime prevention approaches:

1. Community Crime Prevention
2. Situational Crime Prevention
3. Developmental Crime Prevention
4. Crime Prevention through Social Development

### Community Crime Prevention

Community crime prevention is sometimes referred to as neighbourhood crime prevention because, for the most part, these programs tend to focus on local, identifiable entities such as neighbourhoods. It is called “community crime prevention” even when implemented on a city-wide basis. Community crime prevention seeks to directly influence intervening constructs such as social cohesion, community atmosphere, and surveillance. Additionally, these programs try to affect community cohesion, crime levels, and the fear of crime. Neighbourhood or Block Watch programs, Block Parents, citizen patrols and general police-community initiatives (such as education programs, social events, anti-drug activities, etc.) are excellent examples of such community crime prevention programs.

Evaluation studies of the effectiveness of community crime prevention show mixed results. Early research found that familiarity with neighbours and the community

increases with participation in block parties and social events. However, later studies paint a bleaker picture. For example, in a study of two Neighbourhood Watch programs in London, England, Bennett (1990) finds that social cohesion increased in one area and decreased in the other. In addition, building on an analysis of four organized neighbourhoods in Chicago, Rosenbaum (1986) reports no change in the social cohesion in three areas and actually found decreased social cohesion in the fourth.

In general, the literature regarding Neighbourhood Watch programs is mixed. For example, Lab (1997) reports that the literature on citizen patrols suggests that they can be effective in reducing both crime and fear, but that police foot patrols have had mixed results. He points out that the evidence supports the idea of communal action such as Neighbourhood Watch as a successful means of combatting crime and the fear of crime. Gerbner, Cirel, Evans, McGillis, and Whitcomb (1977) also report that official crime records reveal a positive impact of programs. However, some observers have raised questions about the effectiveness of these programs and whether they merely displace crime rather than prevent it. Others have criticized neighbourhood or community crime prevention because these types of programs are aimed primarily at property offences. They have little, if any, impact on interpersonal violence because much of this type of behaviour goes on behind closed doors. Nor do they address other types of crime such as white collar and corporate crime, computer and Internet-based crime, or economic crime.

An example of an early neighbourhood crime prevention strategy was based on Broken Windows Theory (Wilson & Kelling, 1982, 1989). This theory stresses police and citizen foot patrols and greater community efforts to clean up neighbourhoods. Broken Windows Theory formed the basis of the State of New Jersey's "Safe and Clean Neighborhood Program" in the mid-1970s, as well as efforts in New York City in the 1980s. Wilson (1983) reports on the New Jersey experience and points out that while some success was observed with respect to the "clean-up" of the neighbourhood, there was no evidence that foot patrols had reduced crime rates.

Neighbourhood or community crime prevention is appealing because it reflects a "common sense" approach to crime. That is, if we are watching out for each other (including our property), we are less likely to be victimized. By extension, having police officers or citizens patrol neighbourhood streets gives the impression that someone is there to protect us. However, this approach to crime prevention has encountered considerable criticism and is limited in its focus. A salient lesson learned from the experience with community crime prevention is that the involvement of community members is a crucial factor in developing an effective crime prevention strategy.

There has been renewed interest in community crime prevention strategies as a result of the recent focus on social capital as a policy and program instrument. Social capital has come to be seen in community crime prevention as a key ingredient in police-citizen neighbourhood interventions. The role of social capital has been highlighted in the work of Sampson and Raudenbush (1999) in Chicago neighbourhoods. Their efforts in promoting interventions related to social capital and based on informal neighbourhood relationships, as a tool to reduce minor street crimes and disorder, appear to have had an impact on reducing violent crimes in these neighbourhoods.

Corrado, Cohen, Irwin, and Davies (2005) present recent research on social capital that suggests that community networks need to be expanded beyond just police links or coordinated programs to include early education intervention programs, health care, and employment schemes. Their discussion regarding the importance of social capital raises a number of questions about the concept and its use. To begin with, a clear definition of this concept is required if policies and programs are to be developed based on social capital. At the moment, such a definition is not available and there is considerable debate over how social capital should be defined and applied. While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide a detailed discussion of these issues, suffice it to say that a working definition of social capital is required which is sufficiently broad to encompass the experiences of neighbourhoods with informal networks, yet narrow enough to differentiate between these informal networks and other social interaction that goes on in neighbourhoods between residents and such professionals as teachers and police officers who work there. Calling all relationships and social networks in a community “social capital” does not allow us to distinguish between various forms of social interaction and their impact on community functioning. Moreover, this discussion brings several other key variables into focus including the definition of community, the meaning of community-based, and who qualifies as a member of a community or neighbourhood. Equally important is a clarification of the role that professionals have in these contexts.

### **Situational Crime Prevention**

The prioritizing of crime prevention efforts is nowhere more evident than under the umbrella of situational crime prevention strategies. One of its distinctive features is the targeting of a specific problem, place, or person. Canada’s National Crime Prevention Centre (2000b) describes situational crime prevention as a “common sense” approach to crime prevention. It is referred to as such because situational crime prevention often involves taking simple, common sense steps to reduce or eliminate opportunities for crime. Some examples of this common sense approach include not leaving your car keys in the ignition when you leave your car, locking your doors when you leave home, not leaving packages in your unattended car, and taking other such common sense precautions.

Clarke (1983) suggests that situational crime prevention generally focuses on highly specific forms of crime. It involves the management, design, or manipulation of the immediate environment. It is systemic and permanent, and aims to reduce the opportunities for crime, as well as increasing the risk of engaging in criminal activities for a wide range of offenders. Crawford (1998) simplifies this discussion by suggesting three premises for situational crime prevention: (a) reduce the opportunity of crime; (b) increase the risk of detection; and (c) reduce the rewards of crime.

It is difficult to define situational crime prevention without mentioning its two precursors, that is, opportunity reduction (Jane Jacobs, 1961) and defensible space (Oscar Newman, 1972). Moreover, the popularization of the concept of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) represents one of the more well-known and well-utilized situational crime prevention strategies. The CPTED approach suggests that the physical environment can be manipulated to influence behaviours that ultimately reduce the incidence and fear of crime. Further, Crowe (2000) suggests that there is a

resurgence of interest in CPTED. For example, he refers to recent efforts of the State of Florida, which has gone so far as to pass a law entitled the “Safe Neighborhood Act”. This law provides legal authority and funding for the implementation of CPTED strategies.

Lab (1997) writes that situational crime prevention offers an approach that seeks to target specific problems with individualized intervention. These techniques epitomize the idea of secondary prevention. Many of the studies of situational crime prevention, such as those by DesChamps, P. L. Brantingham, and P. J. Brantingham (1991) on transit system fare avoidance in British Columbia, and Ekblom (1992) on preventing post office robberies in London, England, indicate a significant measure of short-term success. Another example is the recent crime reduction effort based on the use of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV). Welsh and Farrington (2004) report on a meta-analysis of what they deem as the highest quality available research evidence on the effects of CCTV on crime in public spaces. They examined the results of studies from the United Kingdom and North America that included follow-up periods of between 3 to 24 months for city centres or public housing (averaging less than 12 months), 12 to 32 months for public transport (averaging less than 24 months), and 8 to 30 months for car parks (averaging slightly more than 12 months). They concluded:

CCTV had a significant desirable effect on crime, with an overall reduction in crime of 21 per cent in experimental compared to control areas. CCTV was most effective in reducing crime in car parks, most effective when combined with improved street lighting and targeted at vehicle crimes, and more effective in reducing crime in the U.K. than in North America. (p. 21)

However, while this example was presented as an evidence-based crime prevention analysis, there was limited information in the report on the different factors potentially affecting the results of each study in the meta-analysis.

The evaluation studies on situational prevention strategies are less clear on the long-term and lasting effects of these types of measures. The reason for this is that it is both difficult and costly to sustain these techniques for extended periods of time. As well, it is equally a challenge to assess the impact of these strategies on the overall rates of crime and to take shifts in crime patterns into account. The success of situational crime prevention strategies has made them very popular with law enforcement agencies and the general public, despite the fact that these strategies do not deal with the perceived root causes of crime. By themselves, these approaches have limited long-term value; however, when included in broader and more comprehensive approaches, they can play a key role in reducing some specific types of crime and victimization.

## **Developmental Crime Prevention**

Crime prevention from a developmental perspective is largely based on the idea that criminal activity is determined by behavioural and attitudinal patterns that have been learned during a child’s psychosocial development. Ideas concerning crime prevention and the fundamental causes of crime are really concomitant ideas. The point is that while some criminal activities are influenced by proximate events, others are influenced by key

risk factors that require long-term intervention.

Research such as that done by Tremblay and Craig (1995) confirms that intervention with young children and their parents has positive effects on three key risk factors: (a) poor parenting (parents); (b) cognitive deficits (life environment); and (c) socially disruptive behaviour (school). This does not negate the importance of other structural risk factors such as poverty and a poor living environment but it does provide easier and more focused opportunities for preventive intervention. In addition, Tremblay and Craig's review of the literature indicates the positive effects of intervention on inadequate parenting. They looked at the formation of attitudes toward parenting, mother satisfaction, family communications, father participation, child abuse and neglect, as well as the rate of a return to work and further pregnancy rates. They found that to the extent that positive effects can be maintained over long periods, they are likely to have a significant effect on a child's development.

Cognitive deficits of all kinds are associated with criminal behaviour. Longitudinal studies such as those done by Moffitt (1990, as cited in Tremblay & Craig, 1995), Farrington (1991, as cited in Tremblay & Craig, 1995), and Stattin and Klackenberg-Larsson (1991) have shown that preschoolers and elementary school children's cognitive deficits predict later criminal behaviour. Most of the studies highlighted by Tremblay and Craig (1995) confirm that interventions (such as daycare participation, special learning opportunities, or social skills training), which focus on stimulating cognitive development, must begin at an early age in order to have a significant impact.

Studies such as Earls (1986, as cited in Tremblay & Craig, 1995) and Mrazek and Haggerty (1994, as cited in Tremblay & Craig, 1995) report positive effects of early treatment on the disruptive social behaviour of children, particularly in the short term. While experience with respect to long-term effects is more limited, there are indications that short-term studies have demonstrated long-term effects (Farrington & Tonry, 1995). Howell (1997, as cited in Lab, 2004) suggests that protective factors are individual or environmental factors that tend to increase resistance to, or inhibit the development of, problematic behaviours. However, as indicated by Catalano, Arthur, Hawkins, Berglund, and Olson (1998, as cited in Lab, 2004), children exposed to multiple risk factors are at substantially greater risk of future delinquent behaviour, even with the positive influence of some protective factors.

A good illustration of the positive influence of protective factors can be found in programs using the Healthy Families model. An evaluation of this model is provided by Boyes and Hornick (2005), who note that the model is based on the Healthy Families America Program. This model was tested in various sites across Canada, including three experimental sites of the Success by Six Healthy Families Program in Edmonton, Alberta (Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre, the Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society, and Terra Association); the Kwanlin Dun First Nation Healthy Families Program in Whitehorse, Yukon; and the Best Start Healthy Families Program in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. The Healthy Families model was successfully implemented at all five sites. At all program sites, over 70% of program time was spent on client-focused activities.

Finally, the Tremblay and Craig (1995) examination of some 49 prevention experiments suggests that early childhood intervention can have a positive effect on the

three very important risk factors for juvenile delinquency: disruptive behaviour, poor cognitive skills, and poor parenting. Two of these – disruptive behaviour and poor cognitive skills – also impact school performance. Furthermore, their review indicates that experiments with long-term follow-up targeting at least two of these risk factors, namely disruptive behaviour and poor parenting skills in childhood, have been shown to have a significant effect on decreasing future criminal behaviour. Tremblay and Craig (1995) indicate that many of the experiments that have been reviewed in the past have been small-scale confirmatory or replication type studies. Moreover, as indicated by Lab (2004):

recent studies based on better theoretical models with quality longitudinal data have demonstrated considerable success at addressing and improving a number of important protective factors and reducing risk factors, including antisocial behaviors such as crime (see Howell, 1997; Kury and Obergfell-Funchs, 2003; Loeber and Farrington, 1998). (p. 145)

From a policy perspective, proponents of this approach believe that money invested in early prevention efforts with at-risk families will have greater payoffs than money invested later, after the child has engaged in criminal activity. However, developmental crime prevention does not sufficiently deal with certain types of crime, such as family-related violence, personal crimes, and white-collar or economic crime. In addition, Rosenbaum, Lurigio, and Davis (1998) note that as a society, we need to understand that children face different risk factors at different points in their development, thus dictating the need for different interventions as they develop. This is a challenge that developmental theorists have only partially dealt with since they focus principally on children and do not typically address the problems faced by youth who develop delinquent characteristics during their preadolescent or adolescent periods. These young people represent a significant portion of those exhibiting delinquent and subsequent criminal behaviour in society.

### Crime Prevention through Social Development

Crime Prevention through Social Development (CPSD), or social crime prevention as it is called in Europe and in some circles in the United States, rests on what Lab (1997) refers to as the assumption that true change in crime and fear can be achieved only through attacking and altering larger social and economic problems and issues. Lab further states that advocates of such social prevention point to problems of structural inequality, poor education, economic or social powerlessness, and other related concerns. Currie (1988) suggests that the approach we need toward crime in the coming decades might be called “social environmental” or, to resurrect an old term, “human ecological”. By this, Currie means a strategy that includes interventions on the level of individuals and families “at risk”. It also moves beyond this level to interventions aimed at the larger social forces that have an impact at the community level and thereby put large numbers of individuals and families at risk.

Are the concepts of social prevention and Crime Prevention through Social Development synonymous? Lab (1997) suggests that from a social prevention orientation,

society needs to address problems at the “macro level”. The social prevention model focuses on developing programs and policies on the national scale to improve health, family life, education, housing, work opportunities, and neighbourhood activities. In addition, we can deduce that for Lab (1997), social prevention is at the frontier or the boundary of what is traditionally viewed as primary and secondary prevention.

On the other hand, social development (which is a term more in use in Canada) attempts to build upon what we believe and know about the social and economic factors that are most closely related to criminal behaviour. The National Crime Prevention Centre (2000a) presents Crime Prevention through Social Development (CPSD) as an approach to the prevention of crime and victimization, which recognizes the complex social, economic, and cultural processes that contribute to crime and victimization. CPSD seeks to strengthen the bridge between criminal justice policies and programs and the safe, secure, and pro-social development of individuals, families, and communities. Furthermore, the National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC) suggests that CPSD tends to concentrate on secondary prevention measures. Such a definition implies that we should focus on key risk factors that contribute to involvement with crime such as those suggested by Crawford (1998) as well as other risk factors discussed above. Once again, these include: individual personality and behavioural factors, family influences, living conditions, school influences, peer group pressures, and recreational and employment opportunities.

One of the key characteristics of the Canadian experience with CPSD is that it is implemented on a relatively small scale and is community driven. In addition, as pointed out by the NCPC (2000a), most of the social development strategies in Canadian communities can be classified under one of three general rubrics:

1. Individual-level strategies that focus on addressing existing deficits that may place individuals at risk of involvement in crime;
2. Family-oriented strategies that seek to strengthen family capacity, such as parenting programs; and
3. Community-level strategies that seek to strengthen local capacity to prevent crime.

Presumably all these strategies focus on high-risk situations.

Some of the critics of a social development approach highlight the fact that its definition and scope are quite broad. For example, Crawford (1998) suggests caution regarding social development approaches because of the potential danger in becoming either too diffused or too dominating within social policy. Social development approaches require a significant amount of human and financial resources from both within and outside the community. It is also difficult to target those responsible for, or at risk of becoming involved in, white-collar crime and so-called “victimless crimes” such as electronic commercial fraud and Internet crime. In addition, the issue of violence against women, especially within private spaces, is not readily amenable to social development intervention strategies. Finally, it is difficult to assess the impact of these broad prevention strategies both in the short and long term since many variables can have a potential impact on outcomes.

## Conclusion: Toward a Comprehensive Crime Prevention Strategy

I have noted key arguments that suggest the need for a new and different crime prevention approach. Crime and victimization continue to exist and while official data indicate a reduction in overall levels of crime, reasonably unchanged levels of victimization counterbalance this. Second, the public view is that the agents of the criminal justice system (police, courts, and correctional services) have not been able to demonstrate that they can reduce or control crime and victimization. In addition, many believe that the criminal justice system contributes to the increase in crime through its use of prisons, which can become training grounds for criminals. The current situation begs the question as to what types of crime prevention strategies are most appropriate and able to produce effective results.

It is my belief that a meaningful strategy for preventing crime should be based on a social development approach that strengthens individuals, families, and communities. Such an approach should be designed and managed at the local level. The strength of a community-based social development approach is that it can address specific factors that are strongly associated with youth as well as adult criminal activity. These include violence in the home, unsupportive family life and parental behaviour, poverty, poor housing, failure in school and illiteracy, drug and alcohol abuse, and unemployment. Advocates of social crime prevention approaches highlight existing and entrenched societal problems of structural inequality, poor education, unemployment, poor employment options, economic and social powerlessness, and other related concerns. These social inequities disadvantage many in Canadian society and have a particular impact on children and youth, the elderly, and single parents.

Prevention based on social development makes sense for our communities by making them safer and more attractive places for all citizens. Moreover, there is ample evidence that well-designed social development programs prevent crime and are cost-effective. The NCPC (2000a), for example, points to American evaluations that show that Crime Prevention through Social Development pays handsome dividends. The Perry Preschool Project in Michigan has been shown to be responsible for significantly reducing juvenile and adult crime in the long term. This conclusion is based on almost 30 years of participant follow-up.

Social development strategies do not, however, necessarily alleviate the short- or medium-term needs of communities that are in crisis and seeking an immediate reduction in crime. As indicated by the Aspen Institute (2002, as cited in Hunsley, 2003):

Comprehensive community initiatives have made great strides in identifying the many moving parts that have to come together to achieve change and in understanding how difficult it is to implement complex community change strategies and to acquire the capacity and resources needed to make them work effectively. (p. 7)

To achieve this, we must add supplementary prevention strategies, usually situational in nature and often including community capacity building, to the longer-term social development approach. Their aim must be to generate a greater sense of

safety and well-being, as well as increasing socio-economic benefits for those residents most in need.

A comprehensive crime prevention strategy needs to meet several important requirements to be effective. These include building active partnerships throughout the community, ensuring that the roles and responsibilities of all players – and especially the police – are clearly defined, putting in place a sound governance structure to help in decision-making, and implementing intervention strategies using an evidence-based approach.

Comprehensiveness thus refers to a systematic process of identifying the priority concerns of a given community, using diagnostic tools to identify and target relevant risk and protective factors particularly with respect to children and youth across multiple domains, and identifying and implementing evidence-based responses that match the prioritised factors. (Hawkins, Catalano, & Arthur, 2002, pp. 955-956)

A comprehensive strategy should be designed to address the multiple risk and protective factors associated with crime and victimization at the individual, family, community, and societal level. Such an approach should yield a higher return than discrete approaches. Establishing a comprehensive community-wide approach is a long-term effort, however, and it may not be a practical option if, for example, key community agencies are unwilling or unable to respond to some specific problems or issues. In such cases, alternative methods are available to provide support for communities facing significant problems that possess limited resources or consensus on how to deal with these problems.

Wyrick and Howell (2004) highlight one of these methods. Their strategic risk-based response model was applied to youth gangs, although in my view it is equally applicable to broader community concerns. They state:

Comprehensive community approaches still remain the ideal community-level response to youth gangs. Many communities, however, cannot implement comprehensive programs for a variety of legitimate reasons and these communities can benefit from developing a strategic risk-based response to youth gangs. (p. 20)

I believe their approach can provide a framework for intervention when key community agencies are unwilling or unable to respond to all the particular concerns identified in a community assessment process. The goal then becomes to focus on key or core issues, such as children and youth at risk, and on factors where there is the most potential for joint partnership intervention.

One key lesson learned by the National Strategy for Community Safety and Crime Prevention (NSCSCP) and reported by Léonard, Rosario, Scott, and Bressan (2005) suggests the need to ensure that the roles and responsibilities of local advisory groups, project coordinators, and partnering organizations (or what I referred to earlier as governance structures) are clearly articulated. Another lesson from this study focuses on the importance of building and maintaining local partnerships as key to

sustaining collaborative action. To this, I would add the importance of ensuring the full participation of the police in any comprehensive local crime prevention strategy. Police officers see themselves as peace officers whose primary responsibility is to enforce the law and maintain public order. As Caputo and Vallée (2010) point out:

A new integrated and comprehensive service delivery model could be a way of giving police officers an expanded role in community problem solving. Such a model would emphasize their skills and expertise as peace officers and law enforcers. It would be build on their operational expertise and experience as first responders. (p. 93)

Finally, it is important that any intervention be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that it is on track and meeting its objectives. According to Welsh and Farrington (2005), “Systematic reviews are the most comprehensive method to assess the effectiveness of crime prevention measures” (p. 349). They also point out that, “in an evidence-based society, [systematic reviews] would be the source that governments would turn to for help in the development of policy” (p. 348). This view is certainly supported by those assessing the lessons learned through the NSCSCP. I share the view that evaluation is a vital element of success in the development, implementation, and sustainability of effective crime prevention programs.

## References

Arcand, M. A., & Cullen, J. E. (2004). *Promising practices: Survey of police involvement in crime prevention through social development in Canada*. Ottawa: Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada.

Aspen Institute. (2002). *Voices from the field II: Reflections on comprehensive community change*. In T. Hunsley (2003, November), Presentation to the ICPC international symposium on crime prevention, Pretoria, South Africa.

Bennett, T. (1990). *Evaluating Neighbourhood Watch*. Aldershot, UK: Gower.

Boyes, M., & Hornick, J. (2005). *An evaluation of the healthy families model in five Canadian communities*. A report undertaken on behalf of the National Crime Prevention Centre. Ottawa: Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada.

Caputo, T., & Vallée, M. (2010). Creating safer communities for children and youth: The role of the police in crime prevention. *International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies*, 1(1), 78-96.

Clarke, R. V. (1983). Situational crime prevention: Its theoretical basis and practical scope. In M. Tonry & N. Morris (Eds.), *Crime and justice* (Vol. 4, pp. 225-256). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Corrado, R. R., Cohen, I. M., & Davies, G. (2005). *Social capital and community crime prevention programs: Impacting research*. Unpublished paper prepared for the Policy Research Initiative, Ottawa.

Crawford, A. (1998). *Crime prevention and community safety: Politics, policies and practices*. London: Longman Criminology Series.

Crowe, T. D. (2000). *Crime prevention through environmental design: Applications of architectural design and space management concepts* (2nd ed.). Woburn MA: National Crime Prevention Institute.

Currie, E. (1988). Two visions of community crime prevention. In T. Hope & M. Shaw (Eds.), *Communities and crime reduction* (pp. 280-286). London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

DesChamps, S., Brantingham, P. L., & Brantingham, P. J. (1991). The British Columbia transit fare evasion audit: A description of a situational prevention process. *Security Journal*, 2, 211-218.

Earnscliffe Research and Communications. (2000, April). Canadian public survey. Ottawa: Author.

Ekblom, P. (1992). Preventing post office robberies in London: Effects and side effects. In R. V. Clarke (Ed.), *Situational crime prevention: Successful case studies* (pp. 66-74). New York: Harrow and Heston.

EKOS Research Associates Inc. (2001). *Survey of Canadian attitudes toward the prevention of crime*. Ottawa: Author.

EKOS Research Associates Inc. (2004, March 26). *Canadian attitudes toward crime prevention: Final integrated report*. Ottawa: Justice Canada.

Gendreau, P., & Ross, R. (1987). Revivication of rehabilitation: Evidence from the 1980s. *Justice Quarterly*, 4(3), 349-407.

Gerbner, G., Cirel, P., Evans, D., McGillis, D., & Whitcomb, D. (1977). *Community crime prevention program, Seattle Washington: An exemplary project*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice.

Government of Canada. (1993). Report of the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General. Ottawa: House of Commons.

Hawkins, J. D., Catalano, R. F., & Arthur, M. W. (2002). Promoting science-based prevention in communities. *Addictive Behaviors*, 27(6), 951-976.

Harvey, L., Grimshaw, P., & Pease, K. (1989). Crime prevention delivery: The work of crime prevention officers. In R. Morgan & D. J. Smith (Eds.), *Coming to terms with policing* (pp. 323-339). London: Routledge.

Hastings, R. (1995). Crime prevention and criminal justice. In T. O'Reilly Fleming (Ed.), *Post-critical criminology* (pp. 315-328). Toronto: Prentice-Hall.

Jacobs, J. (1961). *The death and life of great American cities*. New York: Vintage.

Jamieson, Beals, Lalonde & Associates. (2000). *Crime prevention practice in Canada*. Ottawa: Justice Canada.

Jamieson, W., & Hart, L. (2003). *Compendium of promising crime prevention practices*. Ottawa: The Caledon Institute of Social Policy.

Lab, S. P. (1997). *Crime prevention: Approaches, practices and evaluations* (3rd ed.). Cincinnati, OH: Anderson Publications.

Lab, S. P. (2004). *Crime prevention: Approaches, practices and evaluations* (5th ed.). Cincinnati, OH: Anderson Publications.

Lejins, P. P. (1967). The field of prevention. In W. E. Amos & C. E. Wellford (Eds.), *Delinquency prevention: Theory and practices* (pp. 1-21). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Leonard, L., Rosario, G., Scott, C., & Bressan, J. (2005). Building safer communities: Lessons learned from Canada's national strategy. *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 47(2), 233-250.

## Crime Prevention and Community Safety for Children and Youth in Canada

National Crime Prevention Centre. (2000a). *Crime prevention through social development*. Ottawa: Justice Canada.

National Crime Prevention Centre. (2000b). *Situational crime prevention*. Ottawa: Justice Canada.

Newman, O. (1972). *Defensible space: Crime prevention through urban design*. New York: Macmillan.

Rosenbaum, D. P. (Ed.). (1986). *Community crime prevention: Does it work?* Beverley Hills, CA: Sage.

Rosenbaum, D. P., Lurigio, A. J., & Davis, R. C. (1998). *The prevention of crime: Social and situational strategies*. Toronto: Wadsworth Canada.

Sampson, R. J., & Raudenbush, S. W. (1999). Systematic social observations of public spaces: A new look at disorder in urban neighborhoods. *American Journal of Sociology*, 105(3), 630-651.

Stattin, H., & Klackenberg-Larsson, I. (1991). The short- and long-term implications for parent-child relations of parents' prenatal preferences for their child's gender. *Developmental Psychology*, 27(1), 141-147.

Tonry, M., & Farrington, D. P. (Eds.). (1995). *Building a safer society: Strategic approaches to crime prevention*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Tremblay, R., & Craig, W. M. (1995). Developmental crime prevention. In M. Tonry & D. P. Farrington (Eds.), *Building a safer society: Strategic approaches to crime prevention* (pp. 151-236). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Welsh, B. C., & Farrington, D. P. (2004). Evidence-based crime prevention: The effectiveness of CCTV. *Crime Prevention and Community Safety: An International Journal*, 6(2), 21-33.

Welsh, B. C., & Farrington, D. P. (2005). Evidence-based crime prevention: Conclusions and directions for a safer society. *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 47(2), 337-354.

Wilson, J. Q. (1983). *Thinking about crime* (revised edition). New York: Vintage Books/ Random House.

Wilson, J. Q., & Kelling, G. (1982, March). Broken windows: The police and neighborhood safety. *Atlantic Monthly*, 249, 29-38.

Wilson, J. Q., & Kelling, G. (1989, February). Making neighborhoods safe. *Atlantic Monthly*, 263, 46-52.

Wyrick, P. A., & Howell, J. C. (2004). Strategic risk-based response to youth gangs. *Juvenile Justice*, IX(1), 20-29.

## CHAPTER 2

# AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF CRIME PREVENTION INITIATIVES IN CANADA: A FEDERAL PERSPECTIVE

Michel Vallée

**Abstract:** The author provides an historical overview of crime prevention activities in Canada that have led to the federal government's current direction in crime prevention policy. Drawing on more than 30 years experience as a federal public servant with the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Justice Canada, the author traces more than 100 years of Canadian federal crime prevention efforts, with an emphasis on both internal and external government documents and historical material from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. This brief history of crime prevention efforts in Canada shows a clear trajectory from the mid-1980s onward, towards support for more comprehensive and integrated community-based crime prevention activities. The interventions are increasingly aimed at community safety, health, and well-being while involving the police, other service providers, as well as community members in the process.

On July 5, 2001, the Government of Canada announced an investment of \$145 million in the National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention (referred to as the National Strategy). This funding added to the National Strategy's previous allocation of \$32 million per year. The Government of Canada reported that this additional funding fulfilled a promise in the Speech from the Throne, which had committed the federal government to strengthening its effort to support community-based responses to crime. The federal expectation was that this new funding would increase the National Strategy's capacity to provide communities with the knowledge, tools, and support mechanisms required to address some of the root causes of crime and victimization.

Some view the government's actions as the culmination of years of various federal efforts and reflection upon more effective ways to deal with crime and victimization. The focus in this chapter is to provide an historical overview of crime prevention activities in Canada that have led to the federal government's current direction in crime prevention policy. While this discussion provides a brief historical portrait of Canadian crime prevention efforts, it concentrates on federal involvement in crime prevention. For the most part, the focus is on activities under the direct responsibility of the federal Department of Justice (Justice Canada) and the then Ministry of the Solicitor General of Canada (MSG), presently called Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada. Other departments have also supported crime prevention initiatives, such as: Health Canada; Heritage Canada (and its predecessor the Secretariat of State); Human

Resources and Development Canada (and its predecessor Employment and Immigration Canada); the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs; and Status of Women Canada. These departments, however, have never had a formal lead policy role, nor have they formally documented their specific involvement in crime prevention, except possibly very recently. These departments have provided information, support, and resources to victim services and advocacy groups across the country through several major federal policy initiatives such as the Victims of Crime, Child Development, and the Family Violence Initiatives, among others.

It should be noted that describing the Canadian experience in crime prevention through the eyes of the national federal government, constitutionally responsible for the criminal law, does not negate the important and critical role that provincial or territorial and municipal governments have played over time. For example, provincial and municipal police forces have made important contributions to crime prevention across Canada.

While this analysis of more than 100 years of Canadian federal crime prevention efforts represents only a partial picture of crime prevention activities in Canada, it does reference a vital part of those activities. Most of the information introduced in this chapter comes from the following sources: the author's work experience, which spans more than three decades in both the MSG and Justice Canada; many informal internal documents that do not lend themselves to formal referencing; and formal internal and external publications. In reviewing the material for this chapter, it soon became evident that the annual reports of the two key departments and their agencies offered little information on crime prevention activities prior to 1970. However, the *RCMP Quarterly* provided useful and consistent information on federal policing and crime prevention work. The chapter is therefore divided into five key historical periods:

1. The Early Years (up to the mid-1960s);
2. The Police-Community Relations Era (mid-1960s to mid-1970s);
3. The Community Crime Prevention Era (mid-1970s to mid-1980s);
4. The Policy Development Era (mid-1980s to the early 1990s); and
5. The New Directions Era (mid-1990s to the present day).

## **The Early Years: Up to the Mid-1960s**

Until the mid-1960s, there is little readily available information on early federal crime prevention efforts within the Department of Justice or the Ministry of the Solicitor General of Canada. It should be remembered that the Ministry of the Solicitor General did not exist during the early years. Early efforts are implicitly linked to the work done by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and its predecessors, the Royal North West Mounted Police (RNWMP) and the Dominion Police.

The law enforcement system in Canada originated in its colonial structure. Prior to Confederation, territories or quasi-colonies, such as "la Nouvelle-France", then later Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Québec, and Ontario, relied primarily upon the military to patrol their towns and cities. Dickson (1987, as cited in Griffiths & Verdun-Jones, 1994,

p. 56) indicates that the first police officers were deployed on the streets of Québec City in 1651. After the conquest of Nouvelle-France by the British in 1759, the Governor and his Council adopted law-making and law enforcement roles.

It was not until after Confederation in 1867, in particular the late 1800s, that organized police forces were established. Sheriffs, police chiefs, and constables reported to locally elected or appointed officials. In some parts of the country, the provinces stepped in and created Boards of Commissioners of Police. Generally speaking, it was only after World War I that Canada appeared concerned about having one national police force. Thus, in 1920, the Royal North West Mounted Police became a force responsible for all of Canada through the absorption of the Dominion Police. The new force became known as The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). The headquarters for the newly created force were relocated to Ottawa. The creation of the RCMP brought policing to rural Canada.

While there is little if any direct reference to preventive work (as we now define it) in the RCMP annual reports before the early 1960s, there are occasional references to preventive-type work with the Department of Interior in the Northwest Territories. In addition, there is frequent reference to the work of the Prevention Services Branch from its creation in 1932, to the latter part of the 1960s. Additionally, as far back as the 1930s there are numerous references in the *Royal Canadian Mounted Police Quarterly* to “prevention of crime and prevention work”.

It is noteworthy to mention that the first reference to actual prevention work that the author was able to trace is found in 1897, with the creation of “Prevention Services” as a branch of the old Customs Department. Aside from protecting revenues, its “new” mandate was to patrol the lower Gulf of the St. Lawrence and the Atlantic seaboard. This early preventive force operated until 1921 on a small scale, when the Inland Revenue Department merged with the Customs Department forming the Department of Customs and Excise. Vernon (1936) mentions that Prevention Services was taken over by the RCMP in 1932, at which time its officers were given the additional power of the Customs and Excise Prevention Officers.

During the 1930s, we begin to find more documented information on crime prevention activities. One of the notable articles is found in the premier edition of the *RCMP Quarterly*, July 1933, authored by Prime Minister R. B. Bennett. Prime Minister Bennett states: “The history of the part played in the administration of justice by the Mounted Police proves that they are as intent on conciliation as on accusation; their efforts have been almost as much devoted to the prevention of disputes and of crime as to the apprehension of those who have broken the law” (Bennett, 1933).

During this period, crime prevention is also associated with the advent of new equipment and technology. During the 1930s, many articles in the *RCMP Quarterly* refer to the preventive role of police in relation to the acquisition and use of patrol boats, cruisers, and aeroplanes, as well as technical advances such as fingerprinting and automobile tire marking. There are a few references to the so-called causes of crime, both biological and environmental, in addition to the need to prosecute criminals for the purpose of preventing more crimes and the need to seek the help of local citizens in identifying the distinctive operating methods of criminals. The need to identify

criminals' operating methods becomes a topic of discussion during the second half of the 1930s.

The Prevention Services Branch of the RCMP appears to be the only section to have a formal prevention mandate during this era, primarily interested in preventive work as it pertained to the question of "revenues". Kelly and Kelly (1973) note that much of the prevention effort was spent on reducing or eliminating bootleggers and smugglers (called "rum-runners"). This concern over the "revenue" side of governmental operations continues to the mid-1960s. At this time, the RCMP still had full responsibility for the administration of the following federal statutes: the Customs Act, the Excise Act, the Income Tax Act, the Canada Shipping Act, and the Estate Tax Act (Government of Canada, 1967).

Prevention efforts during the 1940s are marked by three themes: (a) the prevention of juvenile delinquency; (b) the prevention of possible sabotage, as well as the counterfeiting of money, gas, and food coupons during the war years; and (c) the post-war prevention and detection of Soviet espionage. Delinquency prevention and youth crime topped the RCMP list of preoccupations during this period. A number of articles in the *RCMP Quarterly* highlight a variety of issues pertaining to juvenile delinquency. Crime causation and acting out appear to form the basis of the Force's concern. They were also concerned with the most opportune time to take preventive measures. There are references to such factors as: home environment; mental development; not being able to attend school; facing unemployment; and the "dangerous years" for youth crime (identified here as between 15 and 21 years of age). In 1940, RCMP Constable L. Binham suggests: "The policeman should be a guiding force in the life of the youth, encouraging his interests in sports and constructive worthwhile subjects, at the same time instilling in the minds of the youth a respect for the rights and property of others as well as a clean sense of values" (Binham, 1940).

We begin to see a desire to promote an education and reformation role within juvenile courts, rather than the strictly punitive role the courts were taking in dealing with young persons. Prevention becomes linked to rehabilitation, which was also now associated with psychological factors, called "appetites" (e.g., thirst, hunger, and sex); there are also references to "attitudes" (e.g., withdrawing and approaching), emotions (e.g., fear, rage, and love), and self-tendencies (e.g., negative and positive). We also note an early interest in what some referred to as "petty crimes" (Wilson, 1942). For example, a concern about shoplifting (then called "boosting") was discussed, as well as the means of preventing and apprehending shoplifters.

By the mid-1940s, the RCMP (sometimes referred to as the "Force") becomes more articulate about the causes of youth crime and the means to prevent or reduce such crimes. With the advent of the "Youth and Police Movement", the RCMP began to promote a number of programs and approaches with the aim to decrease the amount of juvenile delinquency. The Force became concerned about "urban youth". Local constables were encouraged to be role models for youth through engaging in such local activities as coaching boys in sports, assisting as scout masters, and helping out at the local church. The RCMP philosophy about youth is eloquently summarized in the following quote:

Today more than ever before, Canada's cities are awakening to the need for teen-age centres of recreation, places more conducive to the young person's well-being and more enticing than juke joints and cheap cafes and dance halls, where our young people are given the opportunity not only to associate with others of their own age but to develop their talents along lines in which they have aptitudes (Moore, 1945).

During the 1940s, we see an increasing belief that a youth's environment has a significant impact upon future criminality; and toward the end of the 1940s, references are made to the new concept of the "suburb" as a collection of homes, churches, schools, and stores. In this context, references are also made to drugstores with soda fountains and to "bobby-soxers" with their male counterparts. During this time of social, moral, and technological change, the RCMP began to perceive that technological advances could serve as tools in preventing crime. This was particularly true of the new radio telephone. During the early 1940s, equipping police cars in Western Canada with radio telephones was viewed as so successful in increasing policing efficiency and reducing crime that it quickly expanded. The policing trend of "youth recreation" continued throughout the 1950s, while concurrently dealing with other social dilemmas such as increasing drug trafficking and the "management" of post-war European immigration. These represented challenges for the policing of urban areas.

With the publication and national distribution (in both English and French) of an illustrated booklet entitled, *Crime In Your Community*, the Force began expanding its public communication efforts attempting to reach the broader public. In particular, it sought the cooperation of householders, merchants, and businessmen in crime prevention. Kelly and Kelly (1973) note that the demand for these booklets far exceeded the supply; soon, a second booklet, was published and distributed (called *Beware of Bad Checks*). Thus began a new era of community-focused crime prevention efforts for the RCMP. It is not until the mid-1960s, however, that such policing efforts become formalized.

Kelly and Kelly (1973) suggest that from the mid-1950s to the late 1960s, the Force's primary concern is drug trafficking (both hard and soft drugs), organized crime, white-collar crimes, spies, politics, and security. Consequently, a general crime prevention focus appears to have taken a back seat to these priorities. When prevention activities do take place, they are directed to prevent the aforementioned types of crime. This conclusion is reinforced by an analysis of the Report of the Proceedings of what appears to be the "first" National Conference on the Prevention of Crime, convened from May 31 to June 3, 1965, by the University of Toronto's Centre of Criminology, in collaboration with the Conference of the Chief Justices of Canada. Of interest, the formal list of participants includes judges, federal and provincial justice or attorney general legal representatives, academics, a few politicians, the Deputy Commissioner of the RCMP, and the Commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP). As well, police representatives were in attendance from several major cities including Vancouver, Regina, Toronto, Hamilton, Montréal, Moncton, and Halifax.

Three key issues were identified at the beginning of the conference: First, all the available evidence pointed to a continuing increase in the amount of indictable crime

committed across Canada. Second, there was a realization that society was faced with the sobering fact that in the area of crimes against property, the forces of criminal law had, for several years, fallen further and further behind in bringing malefactors to account for their misdeeds. Third, a mounting concern was expressed by the country's senior police officers, both in public and more vividly in their annual reports, as to their ability to keep up with, let alone get on top of, the growing number of indictable offences (Centre of Criminology, 1965, pp. 7-8).

Does this sound familiar – if not the terms at least the ideas? A reading of the agenda gives an indication of the interest in assessing police relationships with the public and the general attitudes of ordinary citizens toward the police. A review of the agenda indicates that only one portion of the conference's first day was devoted to specific discussions on crime prevention. The conference organizers' statement to the press, suggests at least three key conclusions: First, citizen rights must necessarily involve attention being given to each person's commensurate responsibility for the safety and protection of his neighbours in society; second, there is a question of to what extent the changing picture of crime in our modern society requires a lessening of the insistence on the inviolable maintenance of the individual's rights and privileges in order to secure greater protection for society as a whole; and, third, the discussion groups gave some consideration to the question of whether some restrictions should be placed on the reporting of court proceedings in the news media during the preliminary hearings of indictable offences (Centre of Criminology, 1965, pp. 69-72).

It appears that the conference proceedings reflected the preoccupations of the day, similar to concerns and issues expressed in several articles (cited previously) written for the *RCMP Quarterly* during the 1950s and 1960s. Participants at the conference did, however, reach a consensus concerning the increase in crime and the fact that youth play a significant role in this increase. Participants also agreed on the role played by some of the social changes occurring, namely, increased urbanization, the lack of family and religious ties, the disparity between the "haves and the have-nots" of society, and the lack of responses available to youth courts. These social changes are cited as sources of the increase in indictable offences. Concerns begin to be raised about the increase in negative public perceptions and attitudes toward the police. According to conference participants, the media is a contributing factor in these negative perceptions.

Finally, since few of the participants came from non-judicial or non-legal backgrounds, it is difficult to ascertain the full impact of the conference discussions upon the direction taken in subsequent federal policy. This is a period where there is little federally focused or federally sustained interest in policy relating to crime control issues. The exception, of course, is the RCMP.

## **The Police-Community Relations Era: Mid-1960s to Mid-1970s**

Beginning in the early 1960s and through to the mid-1970s, there are numerous references in either the RCMP Gazette or RCMP annual reports to the Prevention Services Branch of the RCMP. The work of the Branch, however, appears to have little to do with the more recent views on crime prevention; "crime prevention" meant dealing

with the administration of federal statutes such as the Customs Act, the Excise Act, the Income Tax Act, the Canada Shipping Act, and the Estate Tax Act. It is rare to find any direct reference to crime prevention in the RCMP Gazette and the RCMP annual reports. The last reference to crime prevention in the Force's annual reports is in 1961 under the heading, "Other Investigative and Administrative Assistance". It reads as follows: "Work of a preventive and educational nature such as inspection of explosives, magazines, certain drugstores and hospitals, public buildings (for Provincial Fire and Safety Regulations), conducting anti-safe breaking and preventive services patrols, and escorting prisoners or mental patients for other police forces" (Government of Canada, 1961, p. 21).

With regard to the Ministry of the Solicitor General of Canada (MSG)<sup>1</sup> there is reference to prevention in its early years, though it is couched implicitly in terms of youth delinquency and support for the work being done by the Committee on Juvenile Justice, then under the authority of the Department of Justice Canada. The creation of the Correctional Consultation Centre (CCC) during the 1968-69 fiscal year appears to signal the beginning of a federal interest in crime prevention. The CCC was first located in the Departmental Headquarters (DH) of the then Ministry of the Solicitor General of Canada and was subsequently integrated into the Ministry Secretariat as the Consultation Centre in 1973-74. The CCC's mandate highlighted the need to gather and disseminate information on prevention and the need to support "demonstration projects" aimed at implementing new methods in the prevention of crime. Greater attention to public involvement and youth in police training was now emphasized. A reading of the MSG's annual reports during this period indicates a strong push for police-community relations, with an emphasis on the youth population. Several major demonstration projects focusing on the role of the police in schools received funding from the MSG.

A review of the policy mandate of the MSG's Correctional Consultation Centre suggests "finding solutions to a recognized set of problems is the federal field of responsibility consistent with the objectives of achieving sound social defence measures, i.e., the protection of society and rehabilitation of the offender" (Government of Canada, 1971, p. 7). This was slowly becoming a high policy priority for the federal government.

There appears to be little change in direction or interest, however, on the part of the MSG during the first half of the 1970s. Youth and police-community relations continue to be the focal point for demonstration projects and research. Some financial investments were made in prevention programs aimed at youth and the police by the MSG's Correctional Consultation Centre. One example is the funding provided to the Montréal YMCA, in order to assess the value of a street-work approach to reducing juvenile delinquency. Funding was also provided for three conferences, considering the community role and training and research requirements related to "The Police Function in Our Changing Society" (Government of Canada, 1973).

## The Community Crime Prevention Era: Mid-1970s to Mid-1980s

In the mid-1970s, we begin to see some federal efforts to understand what is actually happening in the area of crime prevention, particularly by examining the types of crime prevention efforts being promoted in the United States and the United Kingdom.

In addition, we observe the beginnings of a leadership role on the part of the MSG's Ministry Secretariat. Several pilot projects were funded (for example, there were some relating to Crime Prevention through Environmental Design and target hardening). As well, a major team policing/zone-policing project was funded in Burlington, Ontario. These efforts, and the apparent desire to expand its involvement in crime prevention, led the MSG to provide funding to the University of Toronto's Centre of Criminology for the first comprehensive National Crime Prevention Workshop, held May 21 and 22, 1975.

Gordon Watson set the tone at the start of the conference (which the author attended), by stating that the conference's purpose was "to review developments in the field of crime prevention over the last ten years; to assess these new developments in terms of both their efficacy and their ethics; and, to establish research priorities for the years to come" (Watson, 1975, p. v). Assessing the nature and scope of conference participants and range of topics discussed, it appears that it did indeed make a significant contribution to the future direction of crime prevention in Canada.

B. C. Hofley, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of the Solicitor General of Canada, presented the federal position on crime prevention. Mr. Hofley asked the participants, "to join the federal government in making a commitment to the cause of crime prevention so that together we can work towards a reduction in the overall social and economic costs of crime" (Hofley, 1975, p. 65). He suggested that the federal government was concerned about costs: the high costs of administering the criminal justice system; the costs of financial loss for victims; the costs of security and prevention measures in public institutions, private enterprises, and residences; costs of insurance; the loss of the wage earnings of confined offenders and incapacitated victims; and the consequent increased welfare burden imposed upon the families of those incarcerated.

Mr. Hofley (1975) went on to suggest greater investment in "front-end" interventions, which were to include diversion programs and more police training to promote a service and prevention orientation, both within the RCMP and other police forces. In addition, he highlighted the need to gain more knowledge about crime and its effects. It was thought that this could be accomplished through victimization surveys and by evaluating the effectiveness of crime prevention programs. He also made a link between prevention and the need to take a more concerted approach to young persons in conflict with the law. One cannot help but notice how similar these ideas are to recent debates on the cost and impact of crime and victimization to society. As we will see later, the issue of the cost of crime was part and parcel of the federal government's decision to launch the National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention in 1993.

Participants at the 1975 Conference on Crime Prevention identified the need for research in the area of urban design and crime prevention. The conference participants proposed a definition of crime prevention that included efforts to reduce the desire to commit and the opportunity for criminal activities, along with decreasing the extent to which the criminal justice system is used to deal with crime (Macfarlane, 1975, pp. 125-127).

Notwithstanding the “renewed” federal interest and related policy statement, what really appears to have had the most impact on the federal involvement in crime prevention is the introduction by the Solicitor General, on February 24, 1976, of the Peace and Security Program, introduced along with the MSG’s Youth Employment Program. The Peace and Security Program led to the creation of the Preventive Policing Program later in 1976. This was the forerunner of what would later be referred to as the Solicitor General’s Crime Prevention Initiative. It was located in the Ministry Secretariat and, for the first time, the federal government made public five measures designed to prevent the commission of crime (Government of Canada, 1976, pp. 56-61):

- Development of a national clearinghouse of information on police programs;
- Development of training programs in community relations, crisis intervention, and preventive policing;
- Development and dissemination of model preventive policing programs;
- Promotion of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design; and
- The implementation of victimization surveys.

The latter event was a significant expansion of the federal government’s Youth Employment Program, which included the allocation of departmental-based resources for youth employment. The RCMP began to make extensive use of the Ministry’s Summer Employment and Activities Program (SSEAP), by hiring special constables to work with regular members on a variety of crime prevention and general policing projects (Government of Canada, 1976, pp. 24-25).

It is in 1977-78, with the advent of the Federal Labour Intensive Program (FLIP), that the MSG and the RCMP receive significant resources to support summer students (their first priority) and unemployed youth (in the following year), under the Job Corps Program. These youth were engaged in crime prevention programs and police-community relations programs. The impact of this appears more important for the MSG’s Secretariat, since it redistributed these resources through the funding of a large number of crime prevention projects. These projects were under the supervision of municipal and provincial police forces, as well as community organizations, and provided the impetus for supporting a number of community-neighbourhood crime prevention strategies such as Neighbourhood Watch, operation identification, “lock it and pocket the key”, security check systems, seminars on the protection of business premises, and other programs all across the country. The 1986 Crime Prevention Initiative Evaluation Report states, “The Secretariat has been interested in Crime Prevention for many years, as was evident by the establishment of a Causes and Prevention Research Section in 1974. It was not until the Preventive Policing Program was initiated in 1976 that crime prevention begins to become a programming priority” (Government of Canada, 1986b, p. 2).

During this period, there is also an investment in projects that are early examples of situational crime prevention interventions, mainly with respect to such crimes as shoplifting and residential break and enter. The RCMP continued its community relations and community prevention emphasis, while also initiating other programs, such as youth and community involvement, youth safety, and school drug prevention, among

others. In addition, during the latter part of the 1970s, both the RCMP and the MSG Ministry Secretariat began to test and implement programs that considered issues of domestic violence, crimes against children and the elderly, vandalism, crisis intervention, and victim awareness.

During the latter part of the 1970s, there is also an increasing provincial interest in crime prevention programming. While it is true that the Ministry Secretariat had an emphasis on crime prevention and was moving toward promoting and expanding community involvement by disseminating information and expanding some useful pilot programs to other communities, it is the provinces that took a leadership role in the actual development of crime prevention programs and services. Such a provincial role is confirmed in the 1986 MSG evaluation report, which essentially suggests that the provinces and citizens groups were taking a leadership role in the development of crime prevention activities (Government of Canada, 1986b).

In the early 1980s, interest in crime prevention increased. There is a greater emphasis put on victims of crime and in particular, “wife assault victims” (as it was then called), as well as on children who were victims of sexual and physical abuse. Both the federal government and the provinces were experiencing increased pressure by victims’ advocates and “experts” to give more attention to measures supporting the needs of victims of crime. While crime prevention activities may have initially been viewed as the logical “chapeau” for victims support programs, this changed with the publication of the 1984 Federal-Provincial/Territorial Task Force Report on Victims of Crime in Canada and the subsequent successful effort to develop a stand-alone Victims of Crime Initiative.

The introduction, by the MSG, of a National Crime Prevention Week and the Solicitor General Awards, led the way for an enhanced Crime Prevention Initiative launched in 1984-85 and 1985-86. This initiative focused on three major goals: (a) the development and promotion of policies and programs contributing to the reduction of crime and the impact of crime on Canadian society; (b) the development of a more effective, efficient and humane criminal justice system; and (c) increased public understanding of and participation in the criminal justice system (Doherty, 1986).

From the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, federal crime prevention efforts were concentrated mainly on communicating crime prevention, opportunity reduction, and target hardening strategies. During the latter part of this period, the MSG was giving increased attention to finding appropriate ways to prevent youth from developing attitudes and behaviours “suggestive” of future delinquency. The apex of MSG crime prevention efforts appears during the first half of the 1980s. We see an emphasis on community policing and “specialized and targeted” crime prevention programs, although the specific nature and extent of these are difficult to trace in departmental documents. By its own admission, the MSG recognizes that:

Thus far the development in Canada of community policing and crime prevention has been uneven. Nor has there been complete acceptance of these approaches. There remain large pockets of resistance and even where crime prevention units have been created they are often under-resourced and viewed by the police as “dead ends” for career development. (Government of Canada, 1986c, p. 6).

To summarize, during this era of community crime prevention, there is limited federal interest in the assessment of these crime prevention measures. The possible exceptions are the few anecdotal, self-evaluation efforts that suggest, “the Program was very successful in the eyes of both students and Force members” (Government of Canada, 1977, pp. 23-24). As well, there are a few evaluations of demonstration projects such as the London Police-Family Court Crisis Intervention Unit. The limited interest in evaluation of crime prevention efforts is equally true for the Ministry Secretariat. It is primarily in 1986 that the then Office of Audit and Evaluation completed its first formal evaluation of the MSG crime prevention efforts (Government of Canada, 1986a).

## **The Policy Development Era: Mid-1980s to Mid-1990s – Toward a Comprehensive Federal Policy on Crime Prevention**

The 1986 MSG evaluation report states that the Ministry’s crime prevention approach included research and development, awareness and information, as well as community and social development and coordination. On the surface, the community and social development and coordination approach appears to be more a statement of intent or a wish than a reality. In concrete terms, most of the high profile crime prevention activities focus around the National Crime Prevention Week, established in 1983, along with the Solicitor General Crime Prevention Awards, the National Crime Prevention Resource Centre, and the *Partners in Prevention* crime newsletter. The MSG did obtain additional resources for their crime prevention efforts, including sponsoring a National Conference on “Crime Prevention through Social Development”. A National Workshop on Crime Prevention through Social Development, organized by the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) and the Canadian Criminal Justice Association (CCJA), with financial support from the Ministry of the Solicitor General Canada (MSG), was held in Hull, Québec, February 4 to 6, 1987. This conference brought together approximately 175 people – researchers, policy-makers, and practitioners – involved in criminal justice, social service, health, employment, education, and housing. The objective of the conference was to explore the concept of Crime Prevention through Social Development itself, as well as looking at current knowledge in the field. Consideration could then be given to future steps that should be taken to enhance a commitment to Crime Prevention though Social Development (Canadian Council on Social Development & Canadian Criminal Justice Association, 1987, p. 1).

While the seed for a broadening of the federal policy interest and efforts relating to crime prevention appears to be sown by the MSG, a subsequent political decision in the latter part of 1986 paved the way for the formal transfer, on April 1, 1987, of federal policy responsibility for crime prevention to the federal Department of Justice (Justice Canada). This de facto transfer from the MSG to Justice Canada appears to lead to a “slow-down” in crime prevention efforts and to confusion in stated policy and program development efforts over the next few years. Little documented evidence on further policy and/or program activities pertaining to a social development approach is available from either MSG or Justice Canada during that period.

In the latter part of the 1980s and early 1990s, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), assisted by federal funding, provided much of the leadership in crime prevention activity. This was accomplished through several key national initiatives

related to Crime Prevention through Social Development. These activities included the national workshop (referred to previously), as well as a variety of publications such as the report on the European and North American Conference on "Urban Safety and Crime Prevention" (held in Montréal, October 1989) and the report entitled, *National Social Strategy for Crime Prevention for Canada*, released in 1989. The Canadian Criminal Justice Association (CCJA) prepared this latter report, which was one of the initiatives signalling the importance of social programming in planning a comprehensive agenda for safer communities.

There is, however, documented evidence that federal crime prevention efforts involving both the MSG and Justice Canada were continuing, with a focus on supporting community crime prevention activities. As well, there are interdepartmental policy and program development initiatives, part of a crime prevention policy agenda, that deal with aspects of crime, including substance abuse, drinking and driving, and the sexual abuse of children, among others. Despite extant programs, federal crime prevention initiatives during this period appear somewhat diffuse and poorly coordinated, with little evidence or information on what really works. Hastings (1991) reports the following:

The conclusion to be drawn from the four evaluation reports that were reviewed is that, by 1987, the Ministry of the Solicitor General knew a great deal about how people felt about the way things were being done, but very little about whether it was having any impact on crime or the fear of crime in our communities. Much was known about how to plan and manage an initiative, and about how to implement specific projects, but there was less certainty about just what exactly needed to be done substantively in order to prevent crime. (Hastings, 1991)

From 1987 to 1993, federal crime prevention policy and program development efforts, particularly those of Justice Canada, appear to be influenced as much by external events as by internal forces. The limited number of policies and program development efforts that are documented in Justice Canada files support this conclusion. During this period, information is more anecdotal and its sources come principally from personal discussions and recollections.

One example of an influential external event occurred in October 1989. In 1989 as referred to previously, Canada hosted the European and North American Conference on Urban Safety and Crime Prevention. It was organized by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), the European Forum on Urban Safety, and the U.S. Conference of Mayors, in collaboration with the Montréal Urban Community, five international organizations of cities, and more than 30 other partners. *Agenda for Safer Cities* (a document coming out of this conference) proposed concrete action to prevent property and violent crime, to reduce the demand for drugs, and to decrease the feeling of insecurity within cities. As well, there were suggestions and specific strategies given, based upon the concept of Crime Prevention through Social Development (Canadian Council on Social Development, 1990, p. 8). This conference both proposed and initiated the creation of the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime (ICPC).

The 1992 Paris Conference subsequently followed the strategic Montréal conference on crime prevention. Again, Canada was an active participant. Coming out of the Paris

conference was the suggestion that, among other things, "...governments declare a child and youth policy to promote community implementation of programs and services in education, including pre-school and head start programs, health, housing, drug use prevention, recreation, training, and employment" (Liberal Party of Canada, 1993). The conference also confirmed the initiative to invest in setting up the ICPC in Montréal. This occurred on September 11, 1994.

Amidst all of these activities, Justice Canada, and to a much lesser extent the MSG, continued to fund crime prevention projects. Most of the federally funded projects centred on the community and on young offenders, or focused on both youth and the community. During this period, Justice Canada significantly enhanced its policy development work. It stimulated inter-departmental and federal-provincial/territorial relations, and it began improving the coordination of activities related to crime prevention. For example, in February 1992, Justice Canada set up a working group called the Interdepartmental Committee on Crime Prevention. It was felt that the main objectives of the federal government's crime prevention policy should be: (a) to improve the unfavourable social and economic conditions that are linked to crime, such as poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, and racism; (b) to improve the ability to protect individuals and society by reducing opportunities for individuals to commit crimes; (c) to provide effective law enforcement in communities; and (d) to reintegrate offenders into the community as law-abiding citizens.

Another external force was the work of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General. From November 1992 to February 1993, this committee undertook a national study on crime prevention. The report, called *Crime Prevention in Canada: Towards a National Strategy* (the Horner Report), recommended that Canada develop and promote a national strategy to reduce opportunities for crime and to respond to underlying factors contributing to crime (Government of Canada, 1993c). In addition, the Horner Report recommended the promotion of a national strategy involving partnerships and information sharing among all levels of government, all agencies in the criminal justice system, as well as NGOs and special interest groups.

The Standing Committee also supported the "Safer Community Approach". Here, the community is seen as the focal point for effective crime prevention activity by encouraging problem identification and resolution through inter-agency, citizen, and business community partnerships. The Horner Report also suggested that crime prevention strategies include activities such as reducing the opportunities to commit crime, engaging social development investment and community policing, and the continuing use of traditional legal measures. The committee further recommended an incremental federal investment of its share of the criminal justice system costs, recommending up to a 5% increase over a five-year period. It is important to emphasize that Justice Canada officials were closely involved in and supportive of the work done by the Standing Committee.

As previously mentioned, Justice Canada had hosted a National Symposium on Community Safety and Crime Prevention on March 10 to 12, 1993. As stated by the then Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Pierre Blais:

The result was an exceptional consensus that lasting improvements can only be achieved through a partnership that involves many disciplines and sectors of society, and supports community action to address the causes of crime. Delegates expressed marked support for the Report of the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General entitled *Crime Prevention in Canada: Toward a National Strategy*. (Government of Canada, 1993a)

Mention should also be made of a report produced by the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee for a National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention, called *Community Safety through Crime Prevention*. The Ad Hoc Advisory Committee was created in order to continue the work begun at the Symposium. It submitted its report in October 1993, endorsing a community-driven approach to crime prevention, giving priority to the development of partnerships and coordination at all levels.

While Justice Canada was spearheading these efforts, the MSG was continuing to reflect on its role in crime prevention. In January 1993, a draft paper on the need for a national strategy on crime prevention was circulated internally. The internal working group that produced the paper suggested that, among other things, the MSG build upon the experience and success of the past while recognizing the gaps and limitations inherent in that experience. The paper not only identified the need for a national strategy on crime prevention and fear reduction but also offered suggestions as to how such a strategy might be developed. For example, it suggested a broadening of all leadership roles within the criminal justice system and the various levels of government. As well, it suggested that the private sector and the community play a more significant role and that leadership was also required in order to identify gaps, recognize emerging trends in crime, and deal with cross-jurisdictional implications. It identified the need to manage a coordinated response by all partners in crime prevention (Government of Canada, 1993b, p. 7).

During this period, the RCMP was continuing its community crime prevention efforts, though not documenting these activities very well. With a few exceptions, such as the Police Vocational Ventures/Rovers Program in partnership with Scouts Canada, and the formation of Community Consultative Committees to enhance interaction between police and community, there are few direct references to crime prevention work in the RCMP's annual reports.

It would be remiss, however, not to mention some of the other broad federal interdepartmental initiatives launched during this period, which, in the author's view, impacted the effort by Justice Canada and the MSG to develop a comprehensive crime prevention policy. Probably the best known of the federal strategies, all containing elements of crime prevention, are the Third Enhanced Victims of Crime Initiative (1987-1993), the Brighter Futures and Child Development Initiative (1992-1997), and the Family Violence Initiative (1988). Although it is not the objective of this chapter to describe and assess how these initiatives relate to crime prevention, it is important to recognize their existence and their subsequent influence on the development of a comprehensive, national, federal strategy on crime prevention.

In January 1994, the Government of Canada's Speech from the Throne included a commitment to take measures to address the needs of Canadians on the issue of community safety and crime prevention. In a 1995 Justice Canada Program Evaluation report, we read, "In his response to the Speech from the Throne, the then Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Allen Rock, indicated his support for crime prevention through social development and for the establishment of a Crime Prevention Council" (Government of Canada, 1994d, p. 3). In the following months, in order to foster the development of a National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention, Justice Canada (taking the lead role) and the MSG held a number of interdepartmental consultations. This was done at the federal level through the previously referenced working group and a steering committee composed of assistant deputy ministers. Additionally, a number of federal-provincial/territorial consultations occurred, including discussions on a future National Crime Prevention Council. This was to be facilitated by means of a federal-provincial/territorial working group that would meet with a committee of deputy ministers and Ministers Responsible for Justice.

These federal efforts culminated in a document called, *Outline of the National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention* (Government of Canada, 1994b). This document described the progress achieved in developing six key elements for the National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention including:

- Coordination and communication;
- Public education and awareness;
- Project development;
- Research and evaluation;
- Legislative reform; and
- Mandates and funding.

In the report, cooperation with the jurisdictions was deemed important, especially in light of their responsibilities for service sectors, which have a great impact on community safety and crime prevention (e.g., health, education, social services, administration of justice, municipal affairs, and others). The result of all these federal efforts led to the May 1994 announcement, by the federal Cabinet, of its approval of a comprehensive National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention.

Provinces were also quite active and several provinces began developing and implementing their own provincial crime prevention programs and policies with a social development orientation. For example, all provinces and territories implemented and supported a crime prevention week. Many provinces were actively promoting strategies aimed at preventing crime and victimization. Three examples are:

In New Brunswick, a number of initiatives to prevent and reduce all forms of family violence, in operation since 1987 (Government of New Brunswick, 1997, p. 3); in April 1994, the Manitoba Attorney General, James C. McCrae, brought forward a discussion paper that made reference to the potential creation of a Crime Prevention Centre, as well as the need for coordinated crime prevention programs and information in Manitoba, in both the government and voluntary sectors (Government of Manitoba,

1989, pp. 4-5); and in 1993, the Québec Round Table on Crime Prevention Report (Gouvernement du Québec, 1993) suggested a series of measures focusing on a mix of prevention strategies related to situational and social development with a structure to support crime prevention.

## **The New Directions: Mid-1990s to The Present Day – Toward a National Policy on Crime Prevention**

After the May 1994 decision by Cabinet and before the formal public announcement, work continued in order to finalize the organizational arrangements for the National Strategy including the creation of the National Crime Prevention Council. As one of the key elements of the National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention (National Strategy) (Government of Canada, 1994d), the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and the Solicitor General of Canada, Allan Rock and Herb Gray respectively, announced on July 5, 1994 the creation of a 25-member National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC). Professor Ross Hastings of the Department of Criminology, University of Ottawa, was appointed the Council Chair, and Madame Johanne Vallée, "Directrice générale, Association des services de réhabilitation sociale", was appointed Vice-Chair. Other members of the newly created council came from a variety of sectors, and included child development experts, community advocates, police officers, lawyers, academics, medical doctors, and business people. All the members were appointed for a three-year term.

The goals of the council, as stated by Professor Hastings, were to, "help governments at all levels coordinate their efforts to prevent crime and reduce victimization, and to help communities develop practical solutions for the problems they face in these areas" (Government of Canada, 1995b, p. 1). A review of the external and internal documentation on the National Strategy (including the July 5, 1994 press release) indicates that this was to be an information gathering clearinghouse, involving public education and a policy development phase. The expectation was that the NCPC would work closely with all levels of government to identify trends and successful strategies as well as to propose future directions and priorities. This is exactly what it appears they did. It is also evident that the National Strategy was expected to take a community focus and promote partnerships. Additionally, the National Strategy was to focus on a comprehensive approach in dealing with crime and victimization, one that included community safety, crime prevention, and social development measures.

The level of financial resources allocated to the National Strategy (i.e., \$9.61 million over five years from 1994-95 to 1998-99, including \$5.86 million for Justice Canada and \$3.75 million for the RCMP) was a far cry from the recommendation in the report by the House of Common's Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General in 1993. These resources were primarily meant to support the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) and a small secretariat, program or project development, crime prevention conferences, databases, and public information and awareness. Also included were crime prevention seminars and workshops sponsored by the RCMP.

Specifically, the RCMP was responsible for several major community-based programs: Aboriginal Shield Intervention Program (a culturally-based substance abuse

prevention program); RCMP Community Suicide Intervention Program (a five-day workshop to help police officers, Aboriginal service providers, and advisors to better assess the risk of suicide and provide intervention); the development of educational materials on dating violence; and holding various workshops aimed at community problem solving (Government of Canada, 1998, p. 4).

The first six months of the National Strategy's work was spent on internal federal consultations, arranged through the Interdepartmental Working Group. This process consisted of consultations with the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Working Group and collecting information on federal crime prevention related activities (Government of Canada, 1994b), along with developing priorities and work plans. The NCPC quickly moved toward defining children and youth as a priority focus in its preventive response to crime. In its first annual report (Government of Canada, 1995a), it stated that interventions at all age levels (0 to 6 years, 6 to 12, and 12 to 19 years of age) should be explored with the underlying philosophy that every child is entitled to high-quality and consistent nurturing within a physically secure and emotionally safe environment. It was felt that such an environment would improve each child's opportunity to succeed, reducing the chance of later involvement with the criminal justice system.

The NCPC also identified the need to promote the social and economic benefits that could be gained through Canada's investment in Crime Prevention through Social Development. It decided to devote some energy on what was termed "topical issues in social justice reform", for example, firearms control, proceeds of crime, and social security review. Finally, while it continued to focus on children and youth, the council voiced its intention to pursue its mission of developing comprehensive community-based responses to the problems of crime and victimization. A small number of "demonstration projects" were funded and a significant consultative network developed.

Several months later, Justice Canada submitted its annual report (Government of Canada, 1995b) on the first year of the National Strategy. This was a Treasury Board of Canada requirement. As the federal centre with the responsibility for crime prevention in Canada, the NCPC Secretariat described the work of supporting various advisory and coordinating bodies to the National Strategy, including its support of the council. It also described work relating to public legal education, communications and consultations, departmental project development, research efforts, and community and Aboriginal policing by the RCMP. In reality, however, most of the energy in the National Strategy was spent on setting up, organizing, and developing a network of experts across Canada.

In the next few years, the NCPC and its Secretariat were active in the following areas: the promotion of Crime Prevention through Social Development; building partnerships; producing a series of policy documents; and producing community-based problem solving and development manuals and tool kits. As well, there was some testing of new intervention models, particularly those involving children and youth. While progress and accomplishments were evident, it became apparent that there were challenges, along with weaknesses in the activities being pursued. The October 1993 Justice Canada Mid-Term Program Evaluation Report indicates, "that [while] the implementation of the National Strategy is on track, this cannot be stated with certainty because there is no real evidence that the performance indicators are used systematically"

(Government of Canada, 1994f). Communication and coordination difficulties were also identified within Justice Canada, the federal structure, and at the federal-provincial/territorial level. In short, the focus of the assessment was on the implementation process because the Strategy was really too “young” to generate adequate information about its [program] impact over such a short time period.

A year later, the key message voiced in the NCPC’s second annual report was, “that consensus focuses on three issues: the goals of prevention, the means to achieve them, and the delivery strategy most likely to accomplish them” (Government of Canada, 1997). This report reaffirmed the goals of the NCPC, which were to help design a comprehensive and coordinated strategy that would enhance the quality of life, focusing on the safety and security of individuals and their communities. From statements provided in the report, it appears the council was looking to reaffirm its mandate, while at the same time recognize its limitations. The report stated, “However, a great deal remains to be done to translate the rhetoric of prevention into concrete support for community-based prevention initiatives” (Government of Canada, 1997).

In January 1997, a Justice Canada Program Evaluation Report suggested that [surveyed] respondents had indicated that the National Crime Prevention Council had been successful in advising the federal government [on crime prevention]; that it had been successful in its public education and awareness efforts, in setting up a national clearinghouse capacity, in promoting multidisciplinary partnerships and in establishing subcommittees to deal with important crime prevention areas. More than half of the council’s membership, however, felt the National Strategy did not have access to sufficient resources to do its work effectively. In addition, there remained confusion about the relationship between the council and the National Strategy. This appears evident when we consider the responsibilities of the NCPC in fulfilling the objectives of the National Strategy. During this period the appointments of the council members were reviewed while discussions were also occurring about its mandate.

Notwithstanding the expressed limitations, much was accomplished during these first two and a half years of the National Strategy. It became evident that priority should and would be given to children and youth, as well as to their families, in addition to community-based problem solving and multi-partnership intervention. The “gut feeling” was that the strategy was working, despite the fact that the real evidence of success was not readily available and probably would not be available until a more significant investment was made in developing and implementing comprehensive local crime prevention strategies. This was a key recommendation at the council’s final meeting in June 1997.

Accomplishments of the strategy are echoed in the September 1998 Justice Canada Summative Evaluation Report (Government of Canada, 1998). Program evaluators felt that the National Strategy did indeed support an extraordinary amount of work in the area of crime prevention, given the level of funding provided, not to mention the fact that the NCPC had only operated for three years. It appears that they were very successful in developing partnerships and in achieving a consensus on priorities, which included children, youth, and their families, as well as community-driven programming. More importantly, this was occurring within a social development framework.

Evaluators did find weaknesses in the design of the organizational structure of the strategy, primarily because no one person was charged with the overall responsibility for its success. Also, the role of the NCPC was not clear with respect to the other funded partners and various working groups. In addition, it was felt that the National Strategy made limited use of its performance-measuring framework.

Both the RCMP and Justice Canada were able to leverage internal and external financial and in-kind support for their activities. It is worth mentioning that this program evaluation was conducted after the expansion of the National Strategy into its second phase. More importantly, interest in expanding the National Strategy is observed occurring well before the 1998 Summative Evaluation Report. As the report indicates, it can be traced to the June 1997 Liberal Party of Canada's commitment to the strategy, *Securing Our Future Together*, along with the subsequent reference to the expansion of the National Strategy in the September 1997 Speech from the Throne.

For the federal government, this became an opportune time to reconsider and reassess its commitment to crime prevention. One must keep in mind that two Parliamentary Committee Reports – the Justice and the Solicitor General in 1993 and Justice and Legal Affairs in 1997 – had recommended that the federal government allocate to crime prevention measures 1% (in the former report) and 1.5% (in the latter report) rising to 5% of annual federal expenditures to the police, courts, and corrections, insisting that wherever possible such allocation be directed to community-based crime prevention efforts. Thus, in early 1998, the federal Cabinet reviewed and approved a proposal for a National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention, Phase II (National Strategy II).

In June 1998, with an initial investment of \$32 million per year over a five-year period, the Government of Canada launched Phase II of the National Strategy. The goal was to build on the work of the National Crime Prevention Council to increase individual and community safety by “equipping Canadians with the knowledge, skills and resources they need to advance crime prevention efforts in their communities” (Government of Canada, 2002). At this time, the National Strategy II was put under the operational responsibility of Justice Canada. This was done through a newly created National Crime Prevention Centre, with an external advisory body called the National Steering Committee, chaired by Barbara Hall.

The National Strategy II was provided with several funding mechanisms: the Community Mobilization Program (the largest of four funds providing grants to communities of no more than \$50,000); the Crime Prevention Investment Fund (providing more significant contributions to implement and evaluate comprehensive community-based crime prevention approaches); the Crime Prevention Partnership Program (providing grants and contributions to support the active involvement of NGOs interested in pursuing community crime prevention activities); and the Business Action Program on Crime Prevention (targeting the professional and business sectors, which currently invest significant resources into crime prevention). A Promotion and Public Education Program was also included in the expanded strategy.

Surprisingly, while the National Strategy II continued to be officially co-sponsored by Justice Canada and the MSG, no specific levels of resources were being allocated either to the latter ministry or to the RCMP, as had been the case in the initial phase of the National Strategy. This was corrected, after internal discussions led to a joint memorandum of understanding between the NCPC, Justice Canada, and the MSG including the RCMP. The RCMP would be provided with \$400,000 a year for three years to promote greater police involvement in, and support for, Crime Prevention through Social Development.

The National Strategy II continued to promote early intervention for children, youth, and their families; but it also broadened policy and program orientations to include greater emphasis on Aboriginal people, and girls and women's personal security. The social development framework and the focus on community-based problem solving remained pillars of the strategy in its second incarnation. The need to expand crime prevention efforts and address the root causes of crime was continuously reinforced by Monique Collette, the newly appointed Executive Director of the NCPC. As she herself suggested, "it is only by working with the community that government can truly help in fostering crime prevention environments" (M. Collette, personal communication, 2002)<sup>2</sup>.

In short, the strategy was designed to prevent crime by encouraging multi-partnership approaches, community-based problem solving, and to increase public awareness of effective social development approaches to crime prevention. A review of various press releases and related documents indicates that the expansion inherent in National Strategy II was viewed as contributing to the government's overall priorities of children, youth, Aboriginal communities, women's personal security, as well as to the government's social and economic union initiatives. Federal officials also felt that sufficient linkages had been made to other programs (the National Children's Agenda, the Family Violence Initiative, the Youth Employment Strategy, the Young Offenders Program, and Aboriginal Head Start, to name a few).

Whether feasible or not, federal officials affirmed that departmental linkages would ensure that duplication of funding would not occur and that crime prevention objectives would be integrated within other programs, with the lead role to be taken by other federal departments. As already mentioned, these considerations serve to reinforce a previous observation, namely, that while lead responsibility for crime prevention was assigned to Justice Canada and the MSG, this did not negate the fact that other federal departments were also involved in activities related to crime prevention, some to a significant extent.

One of the unique characteristics of the National Strategy II is that the provinces and territories played a significant decision-making role related to project funding. This was particularly the case with the Community Mobilization Program. In addition, a great number of projects were funded over the following two and a half years. In fact, by the end of 2000, more than 1,300 projects, located in over 450 communities across Canada, had received federal funding. Given this significant financial investment, it is more than appropriate to find out whether this phase of the strategy actually met the expectations of the Parliamentary Committees, the members of the previous National

Crime Prevention Council, the Government of Canada, and most importantly, the individuals, neighbourhoods, and communities most affected by crime and victimization.

The January 2001 Justice Canada mid-term evaluation provides insight into the impact of Phase II activities. For example, evaluators found widespread support among key stakeholders. Further, the Canadian public was being informed about crime prevention through a social development approach, as advocated by the National Strategy. Grants and contributions to local community efforts were viewed as an appropriate means to provide support for community mobilization and problem solving efforts. Moreover, the evaluation acknowledged that an immense amount of work had been accomplished over the first two and a half years of the second phase of the National Strategy. On the downside, the report suggests that the National Strategy needed to better tailor the strategies and resources required for high need, low capacity communities and for those communities whose first language is neither English nor French (Government of Canada, 2001)<sup>3</sup>. As well, the important issue of program and community sustainability was raised as a key challenge for the National Strategy. The issue of further investing in the National Strategy's organizational structure in order to bring services closer to communities and to facilitate the gathering, monitoring, and dissemination of information pertaining to the ongoing performance of the strategy was discussed and emphasized. The program evaluators concluded their assessment by stating that:

The National Strategy has accomplished a great deal to date. The focus of its efforts during the remainder of its five-year agenda will be to improve on its current operations, to enhance ongoing monitoring and evaluation of its work, to tailor its activities to targeted groups and communities, and to capitalize better on what it has learned to ensure its ongoing development. (Government of Canada, 2001)

The Government of Canada, however, was already assessing the need to further increase the resources provided through the National Strategy II. It appears from the official public documentation available, that the “overwhelming success” of the National Strategy, the continuing need for new crime prevention efforts, and the advancement of knowledge about crime prevention was the rationale for the Government of Canada’s decision (officially announced in July 2001) to invest an additional \$145 million over four years (2001-2005) in Phase II of the initiative. Take note that the government had previously indicated its commitment to expand the National Strategy for Community Safety and Crime Prevention in its 2001 Speech from the Throne. The Liberal Plan for the Future of Canada indicated its commitment to gradually increase funding for the National Strategy by \$145 million over four years. This time, the MSG and the RCMP received a small portion of the new resources, totalling \$5.6 million or 4% of the \$145 million over four years. The 2003 Building Safer Communities Publication entitled, *NCPS Highlights: Building on Progress, Charting the Future* (Government of Canada, 2003, p. 2) suggests three key priorities:

- Promoting the integrated action of key governmental and non-governmental partners to reduce crime and victimization;

- Assisting communities in developing and implementing community-based solutions to problems that contribute to crime and victimization, particularly as they affect children, youth, women and Aboriginal people; and
- Increasing public awareness of, and support for, effective approaches to crime prevention.

This second thrust of the National Strategy II encouraged the development and implementation of numerous activities and initiatives. For example, the NCPS Highlights document (Government of Canada, 2003) indicates that the National Strategy supported activities in over 780 communities and funded approximately 45 large-scale projects and their evaluations. In addition, the National Strategy had also engaged in the development of knowledge in several areas such as bullying and school-based anti-violence. In a recent article, Léonard, Rosario, Scott, and Bressan (2005) discuss the numerous lessons learned from the National Strategy's funded activities. The authors highlight the many challenges of community-based initiatives and their related effectiveness. They further suggest:

Because of challenges in program implementation (maintaining a random assignment, retention and attrition rates of participants, program monitoring) and evaluation of community-based projects (associated with the quality of program implementation and difficulties in securing the involvement of participants), it is often difficult to assess whether projects produce or sustain their impacts or effectiveness over the long term. (p. 242)

During that period, it appeared increasingly clear that the National Strategy pursued stated objectives, but with a renewed interest in the application of knowledge and evidence-based intervention. More specifically, as indicated by Leonard et al. (2005):

It is also clear that a national strategy must chart a strategic course in crime prevention and community safety and that it must have a resource commitment that undergirds a will to develop and utilize evidence-based knowledge and the determination to reflect and respond to arising political and policy challenges. (p. 246)

Finally, from what little information is available, it appears that the advent of the Harper Government is having a significant impact on the National Strategy's direction, for example through an increased focus on issues such as drug-related crime, youth gangs, and gun violence. We should note that several years ago the National Strategy was the subject of a review by the federal Cabinet and by Treasury Board but little has officially transpired from this review with the exception of a few new areas of interest being identified for consideration, for example, youth gangs and gun violence. Parallel to this review process, the National Crime Prevention Centre invested time and effort in a strategic review process in the fall of 2006. The results of this review were made public in 2007 through a reformulation of the NCPC mission statement by Public Safety Canada (PSC) via its website, which now indicates that, as of December 6, 2009, the "NCPC's mission is to provide national leadership on effective and cost-efficient ways to both prevent and reduce crime by addressing known risk factors in high-risk populations and places."<sup>4</sup>

Further, PSC states that, “to achieve its mission, the NCPC develops policies; gathers and disseminates knowledge to Canadian communities; and, in cooperation with the provinces and territories, manages funding programs that support community crime prevention projects through time-limited grants and contributions” (Government of Canada, 2009, p. 1). In 2008, the budget for ongoing funding of crime prevention was \$30 million, which means that the Government of Canada “effectively doubles the National Strategy’s permanent funding base to \$63 million per year” (Government of Canada, 2009, p. 1).

It appears that the major changes that have occurred since the Harper Government came to power have been to focus the NCPC’s effort on funding and evaluating interventions to prevent and reduce offences among those most at risk with an emphasis on issues such as drug-related crime, youth gangs, and gun violence. As well, the emphasis is on supporting crime prevention interventions that have been shown to be effective through research. While investing significant resources in evidence-based crime prevention interventions appears to be an appropriate strategy, it does represent a significant departure from previous community safety and crime prevention efforts. Importantly, it will limit financial support to communities who wish to test out new ideas and approaches directed toward their particular needs, as well as potentially limit the traditional support provided through the National Strategy to communities in need of capacity building if they are unable to put in place “proven crime prevention programs”. This is particularly true for northern and isolated communities as well as inner-city neighbourhoods faced with major socio-economic and crime problems.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

Canada’s efforts in crime prevention emerged slowly with early activities focused on the enforcement of statutes and existing laws. From the late 19th century to the latter part of the 1930s, crime prevention consisted primarily of activities spearheaded by the RCMP. During the 1930s, crime prevention was associated with acquiring new equipment and technology to help in the enforcement of statutes, particularly with respect to reducing or eliminating “rum-running”. By the 1940s, prevention efforts were marked by three themes: the prevention of delinquency; the prevention of sabotage and the counterfeiting of money, gas and food coupons; and post-war prevention and detection of Soviet espionage.

During the 1950s and 1960s, general crime prevention took a back seat to prevention-related activities focusing on drug trafficking, organized crime, white-collar crime, spies, politics, and security. However, the National Conference on the Prevention of Crime held in 1965 at the University of Toronto, drew attention to the role of the community in dealing with crime and its prevention.

Throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s, preventive efforts continued to emphasize the enforcement of statutes and laws especially with respect to the RCMP. At the same time, however, the creation of the Correctional Consultation Centre in 1968-69 signalled the beginning of a growing recognition of the importance of the social causes of crime. As well, this period was one in which there was a growing awareness of the role of the

police in activities beyond enforcement. In addition, children and youth were often the focal point of prevention strategies.

By the early 1980s, crime prevention began to emerge as an important topic in the academic and law enforcement literature, and notions of social development began to gain support. During the early 1990s, the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) was established, beginning a process where national attention was paid to crime prevention in Canada. The initial success of the NCPC led to continued support and the announcement of Phase II of this initiative. At the same time, a social development approach gained popularity and national support. This was emphasized in the approval of Phase II of the Initiative by the federal Cabinet, which provided an additional \$90 million over three years. While, the fundamental pillars of the initiative remained intact (namely, community partnerships, high-risk populations including children and youth, and social development), increased emphasis was placed on encouraging more comprehensive interventions that include more short- and medium-term prevention strategies. As well, there was support for the development of inclusive community governance structures and the application of knowledge-based intervention strategies.

In more recent years, we observe an increasing attention to high-risk behaviour such as youth gangs and gun violence on the part of the federal government and on implementing and evaluating the impact of proven crime prevention programs.

This brief history of crime prevention efforts in Canada shows a clear trajectory from the mid-1980s onward, toward support for more comprehensive and integrated community-based crime prevention activities. The interventions are increasingly aimed at community safety, health, and well-being, while involving the police, other service providers, as well as community members in the process.

The future of crime prevention activity in Canada will no doubt build on this rich history. The development of policy in this area will include the need to be accountable for the resources devoted to crime prevention activities. This will require acceptance of an evidence-based intervention philosophy and the ongoing use of thorough and systematic evaluations to assess the long-term viability and effectiveness of the crime prevention activities undertaken. Moreover, crime prevention efforts will need to demonstrate that they are addressing the concerns of key stakeholders regarding questions of crime and victimization in Canadian communities. At the present time, there is widespread support among the public and the police community for crime prevention activities that address the root causes of crime through a social development approach. Whether this continues in the future will depend upon the effectiveness of the actions of stakeholders and policy-makers in addressing this issue of vital concern to Canadian society.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The Ministry of the Solicitor General of Canada and its Departmental Headquarters were created in fiscal year 1966-67. The Departmental Headquarters was replaced by the Ministry Secretariat in fiscal year 1973-74.

<sup>2</sup> This quote was provided by Ms. Monique Collette at the request of the author to help summarize her thinking around the role of government in crime prevention.

<sup>3</sup> In the January 2001 *Program Evaluation Report*, reference is made to the fact that “for the purposes of this evaluation, the term ‘high needs communities’ is used to refer to communities at risk that possess limited resources and capacity for change and that are isolated or marginalized from the mainstream society due to geography (rural/remote locations) and/or due to a combination of socio-economic and cultural factors.”

<sup>4</sup> Public Safety Canada. National Prevention Crime Centre. 2007. *A Blueprint for Effective Crime Prevention*. Ottawa: Public Safety Canada.

## References

Bennett, R. B. (1933, July). *RCMP Quarterly*, 1(1).

Binham, L. (1940, April). *RCMP Quarterly*, 7(4).

Canadian Council on Social Development and Canadian Criminal Justice Association. (1987). *Crime prevention through social development: A national workshop report* (p. 1). Ottawa: Author.

Canadian Council on Social Development. (1990). *Safer communities: An emerging Canadian experience* (p. 8). Ottawa: Author.

Centre of Criminology. (1965). *National conference on the prevention of crime: Report of the proceedings* (May 31st to June 3rd). Toronto: University of Toronto.

Doherty, P. (1986). *Crime prevention research in the Ministry of the Solicitor General of Canada*. (User Report No. 1986-54). Ottawa: Solicitor General of Canada.

Government of Canada. (1925). Annual report of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Ottawa: Author.

Government of Canada. (1961). *The commissioner's annual report*. Ottawa: Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Government of Canada. (1967). Annual report of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Ottawa: Author.

Government of Canada. (1971). Annual report of the Ministry of the Solicitor General of Canada for fiscal year 1970-71. Ottawa: Author.

Government of Canada. (1973). Annual report of the Ministry of the Solicitor General of

Canada for fiscal year 1972-73. Ottawa: Author.

Government of Canada. (1976). *Peace and security program communications package, February 4, 1976*. Ottawa: Solicitor General of Canada.

Government of Canada. (1977). Annual report of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for fiscal year 1976-77. Ottawa: Author.

Government of Canada. (1986a). *Evaluation of the crime prevention initiative, 1974-1985, January 14, 1986* (Office of Audit and Evaluation, Ministry Secretariat, Corporate Systems). Ottawa: Solicitor General of Canada.

Government of Canada. (1986b). *Report on the evaluation of the crime prevention initiative, 1974-1985* (Ministry Secretariat, Corporate Systems). Ottawa: Solicitor General of Canada.

Government of Canada. (1986c). *The Solicitor General's program of crime prevention* (Internal report dated September 10, 1986 by the Programs Branch). Ottawa: Solicitor General of Canada.

Government of Canada. (1993a). Foreword of the proceedings, March 10-12, 1993. *National Symposium on Community Safety and Crime Prevention*. Ottawa: Justice Canada.

Government of Canada. (1993b). *Draft paper on safety and security through crime reduction and prevention*. (Police & Security Branch). Ottawa: Secretariat of the Solicitor General of Canada.

Government of Canada. (1993c). *Crime prevention in Canada: Toward a national strategy*. (Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General of Canada. The Horner Committee Report). Ottawa: House of Commons.

Government of Canada. (1994a). Discussion document on the proposed terms of reference for the interdepartmental committee on crime prevention. Ottawa: Author.

Government of Canada. (1994b). *Outline of the national strategy on community safety and crime prevention*. Discussion document presented by the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Working Group, March 22-24, 1994, seeking the approval of the Ministers Responsible for Justice for the final development of a national strategy on the basis of the action plan proposed in said paper. Ottawa: Author.

Government of Canada. (1994c). *National strategy on community safety and crime prevention: An evaluation framework* (Program Evaluation Section). Ottawa: Justice Canada.

Government of Canada. (1994d). *National Crime Prevention Council created*. (News Release, July 5, 1994). Ottawa: Author.

Government of Canada. (1994e). *Roadmap of federal activities relating to crime prevention*.

A document assembled in September 1994 to provide an overview of federal activities relating to crime prevention and community safety. Ottawa: Author

Government of Canada. (1994f). *Mid-term program evaluation report on the national strategy on community safety and crime prevention*. (October 1993, Evaluation Section, Research, Statistics and Evaluation Directorate). Ottawa: Justice Canada.

Government of Canada. (1995a). *First annual report of the National Crime Prevention Council* (December 1995). Ottawa: Justice Canada.

Government of Canada. (1995b). Annual report of the national strategy on community safety and crime prevention for 1994-95 (May-June 1995). Ottawa: Justice Canada.

Government of Canada. (1997). Mobilizing for action: The second annual report of the National Crime Prevention Council (June 1997). Ottawa: Justice Canada.

Government of Canada. (1998). Summative evaluation of the national strategy on community safety and crime prevention, September 30, 1998 (Program Evaluation Section). Ottawa: Justice Canada.

Government of Canada. (2001). *Mid-term evaluation of the national strategy on community safety and crime prevention, Phase II* (Technical Report, Evaluation Division, Policy Integration and Coordination). Ottawa: Justice Canada.

Government of Canada. (2002). *Phases of the national crime prevention strategy* (Information taken from summary document on the National Strategy's website). Ottawa: Justice Canada. Retrieved from <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/res/cp/res/ssincps-amosnpsc-eng.aspx>

Government of Canada. (2003). *National crime prevention strategy highlights: Building on progress, charting the future*. Ottawa: Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada. Retrieved from <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/res/cp/res/ssincps-amosnpsc-eng.aspx>

Government of Canada. (2009). *National crime prevention strategy: Support the successful implementation of the national crime prevention strategy*. Ottawa: Public Safety Canada. Retrieved December 6, 2009 from <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/res/cp/res/ssincps-amosnpsc-eng.aspx>

Government of Manitoba. (1989). *An integrated approach to crime and victim assistance: A discussion paper*. Winnipeg, MB: Attorney General of Manitoba.

Government of New Brunswick. (1997). *Crime prevention in New Brunswick: A summary of initiatives*. Fredericton, NB: Solicitor General of New Brunswick.

Gouvernement du Québec. (1993). *Pour un Québec plus sécuritaire: Partenaires en prévention*. Rapport de la Table ronde sur la prévention de la criminalité. Québec, PQ: Ministère de la sécurité publique du Québec

Griffiths, C., & Verdun-Jones, S. (1994). *Canadian criminal justice* (2nd ed.). Toronto:

Harcourt Brace & Company, Canada Inc.

Hastings, R. (1991). An inventory of crime prevention and community policing projects 1974-1991 in Canada (Final Report, Vol. 1). Ottawa: Solicitor General of Canada.

Hofley, B. C. (1975). Presentation of the federal position. In D. Macfarlane (Ed.), *Second national crime prevention workshop: Report of the proceedings, May 21-22, 1975*. Toronto: Centre of Criminology, University of Toronto.

Kelly, N., & Kelly, W. (1973). *The Royal Canadian Mounted Police: A century of history (1873-1973)*. Edmonton, AB: Hurtig Publishers.

Léonard, L., Rosario, G., Scott, C., & Bressan, J. (2005). Building safer communities: Lessons learned from Canada's national strategy. *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 47(2), 233-250.

Liberal Party of Canada. (1993, April 22). *Crime prevention and urban safety* (Announcement of a crime and justice policy package). Ottawa: Author.

Macfarlane, D. (Ed.). (1975). *Second national crime prevention workshop: Report of the proceedings, May 21-22, 1975*. Toronto: Centre of Criminology, University of Toronto.

Moore, E. R. (1945, October). *RCMP Quarterly*, 11(2).

Moore, E. R. (1946, January). *RCMP Quarterly*, 11(3).

Vernon, M. H. (1936, January). *RCMP Quarterly*, 3(3).

Watson, G. (1975). Foreword to the report of the proceedings. In D. Macfarlane (Ed.), *Second national crime prevention workshop: Report of the proceedings, May 21-22, 1975*. Toronto: Centre of Criminology, University of Toronto.

Wilson, D. J. (1942, January). *RCMP Quarterly*, 9(3).

## CHAPTER 3

# AN EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH TO COMMUNITY SAFETY

Rick Linden

**Abstract:** The author notes that despite the fact that the fight to move crime prevention to a more prominent place in the public agenda has been partially won after decades of effort, there is nonetheless a significant segment of the population and legislators who still believe that “cracking down on crime” is the best way to protect society. Some policy-makers have now been convinced that crime prevention is a better way of controlling crime than tinkering with laws and fine-tuning the justice system, but unless crime prevention advocates can continue to demonstrate that the time and money now going to crime prevention produces results, the author argues there is a risk of losing what has been gained. He describes some of what we know about the causation of crime and delinquency, links these findings with crime reduction strategies, and looks at some of the evidence concerning the effectiveness of these crime prevention programs. He observes sardonically that if reducing crime were a simple task, Canada would have become crime-free many years ago.

After decades of effort, the fight to move crime prevention to a more prominent place in the public agenda has been partially won. Some policy-makers have now been convinced that crime prevention is a better way of controlling crime than tinkering with laws and fine-tuning the justice system. However, many political leaders and a significant segment of society still believe that “cracking down on crime” after it happens is the best way to protect society, and they are eager to criticize the “softer” preventive approach. Unless crime prevention advocates can continue to demonstrate that the time and money now going to crime prevention produces results, there is a risk of losing what has been gained.

While it is hard to be critical of good intentions, the sad truth is that much of the time and money spent on crime prevention has been wasted. Despite the successes of the last decade, efforts to prevent crime haven’t been nearly as successful as they might have been. There is ample research demonstrating that most crime prevention programs fail to prevent crime (Rosenbaum, 1986; Sherman et al., 1997). A major reason for this is that prevention programs often have no theoretical or empirical connection with the factors that cause crime<sup>1</sup>. Programs are adopted for a variety of reasons: Some are fashionable; some have strong lobbies<sup>2</sup>; some are set up for political reasons (such as showing the public that government is doing something, or putting politicians in the spotlight by allowing them to present cheques to the community). Evidence-based crime prevention means that we select programs that are demonstrably likely to be successful. This means

that planners must analyze crime and disorder problems, determine likely causes of those problems, and implement programs that address these causes. This chapter will describe some of what we know about the causation of crime and delinquency, link these findings with crime reduction strategies, and look at some of the evidence concerning the effectiveness of these crime prevention programs.

While this volume focuses on social development programs, it is worth noting that a wide variety of other crime prevention strategies have also been shown to be effective. These include situational crime prevention (i.e., environmental design), community-based strategies (i.e., Neighbourhood Watch), administrative/legal strategies (i.e., zoning bylaws), and police-based strategies (i.e., offender-oriented policing). A long-standing debate in the field of crime prevention has been whether prevention programs should focus on immediate problems or if the root causes of crime should be addressed. Unfortunately, this debate has often been framed in “either/or” terms when in reality a multi-faceted approach is necessary. Dealing with the root causes of crime takes time and often depends on actions which can be very difficult to achieve, such as reducing unemployment and improving the education system. To wait for these changes to take place would mean that nothing would be done to prevent victimization in the meantime. Also, even if all the changes proposed in a social development “wish list” could be implemented, the pool of motivated offenders would only be reduced, not eliminated.

On the other hand, many of the defensive crime prevention strategies, particularly those involving target hardening, can isolate members of a community from one another, as those who can afford it barricade themselves in locked apartments with security systems in buildings guarded by doormen and policed by private security guards. There are several other reasons why strategies must deal with the underlying causes of crime. First, even when opportunity reduction strategies are effective, they may result in some displacement to other parts of the community. Second, most crime prevention programs are targeted at property crimes and do not address the serious problem of interpersonal violence<sup>3</sup>. Finally, community-based crime prevention can be very difficult to accomplish – programs are often hard to implement and even harder to maintain. This is particularly the case in disorganized communities with high crime rates. It is by no means a sure thing that organizing neighbours, or marking property, or altering housing design will be successful, so there is a need to find ways of reducing the number of potential offenders. Ideally, a mix of strategies will be used so that short-term needs can be addressed through situational and police-based strategies while the number of potential offenders is reduced over the longer term.

Also, there are many situations in which the distinction between social development approaches and situational strategies may be an artificial one. While some see social development approaches as the most valuable ones and reject the others, strategies such as more effective police tactics and target hardening may play a critical role in the social development of communities. For example, in a recent volume looking at youth violence in the United States, Moore and Tonry (1998) point out the importance of cultural supports for violence. They feel that a culture of violence has grown up in some communities because of the emergence of violent street drug markets, particularly those associated with crack cocaine. Young people growing up in such communities

will find violence very difficult to resist. In these circumstances, creating a safe, orderly environment is a necessary first step toward changing the neighbourhood. In very disorganized communities, this means that police and environmental design strategies may actually be vital components of a social development strategy. Unless order is restored, local residents and organizations will be unable to rebuild their communities.

Kelling and Sousa (2001) concluded that police strategies were responsible for significant reductions in crime in New York<sup>4</sup> and they feel that it is likely these crime reductions will help neighbourhoods to regain the social capital they need to keep rates of crime at a lower level. In a similar vein, an experiment in a British community (Painter & Farrington, 1997) showed that improving street lighting reduced crime significantly in a public housing project compared to a control project where the lighting was not changed. Not only did crime go down, but residents also reported feeling much safer, and pedestrian traffic (particularly females) increased. Somewhat surprisingly, rather than being displaced to the poorly lit neighbouring control estate, the numbers of young people who gathered at night in the experimental estate actually increased significantly. Thus the improved lighting helped to strengthen the social capital of the estate and to reduce crime. The situational tactics that are normally called secondary prevention may be the catalysts needed to initiate a “virtuous cycle” of prevention that will lead to changes that would be categorized as social development.

## What We Know About the Causes of Crime and Delinquency

Criminologists have found that a small proportion of offenders commit the majority of serious crimes. Studies have shown that from 5% to 10% of young people are responsible for 50% to 70% of offences (Waller, 2006). Research on the causes of crime among these persistent offenders has looked at a wide range of factors including individual characteristics and social variables such as the neighbourhood, the family, the peer group, and the school. Our knowledge in this area is now well established. Over the last decade much of the early research on correlates of crime has been replicated many times and there is a high degree of consensus about the risk factors that should be addressed in prevention programs (cf., Surgeon General, 2001). The most important of these risk factors are:

### 1. Neuropsychological factors.

There is some evidence of neuropsychological correlates of offending, particularly chronic offending. These can be caused by a variety of factors including heredity, maternal drug or alcohol abuse, exposure to toxic materials, and poor prenatal nutrition. Some of the behavioural correlates include learning disorders, attention deficit disorder, impulsivity, and hyperactivity (Moffitt, 1990, 1993).

### 2. Family factors.

Family variables are important predictors of crime and delinquency. Among these family variables are: lack of supervision and monitoring of children's behaviour (Linden, 2004); harsh and/or inconsistent punishment (Thomas, 2004); poor communication; parent-child

conflict; family violence; family dependence on welfare; and parental criminality (Howell & Hawkins, 1998). In their review of longitudinal delinquency studies, Lipsey and Derzon (1998) found that the strongest predictor of youth violence was the quality of parent-child relations.

### **3. School factors.**

Early school failure is predictive of subsequent violent behaviour (Maguin & Loeber, 1996). Many other measures of school adjustment and school success are also correlated with delinquency.

### **4. Peer Factors.**

Crime and delinquency are strongly influenced by peer groups.

- a. Gangs increase the likelihood of delinquency even more than other peer groups (Huizinga, 1997; Thornberry, Krohn, Lizotte, & Chard-Wierschem, 1993).
- b. Much of the violence that takes place among young people is caused by the need to maintain “respect” from their peers. The street code of conduct is difficult for any young person to resist (Anderson, 1998).

### **5. Neighbourhood factors.**

Crime and delinquency breed in disorganized communities where community members cannot exercise control over things that happen in their neighbourhood.

- a. Poor neighbourhoods with high rates of residential mobility have high crime rates (Sampson, 1995).
- b. Neighbourhoods with high rates of single-parent households have high crime rates (Sampson, 1995).
- c. Neighbourhoods with high anonymity and minimal relationships among people will have high rates of crime and delinquency (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997).

### **6. Economic factors.**

While there is almost no correlation between crime and broad measures of social class, there is evidence that those at the very bottom of the class ladder are much more likely to become involved in criminal behaviour than the rest of the population (Clelland & Carter, 1980).

Successful crime prevention programs must address these causal factors. There are two ways of approaching these correlates or risk factors for crime and delinquency. First, we can try to change the factors directly. For example, if we conclude that poor parenting skills contribute to crime in a community, we can develop parenting programs that help to teach parents to deal with their children more effectively. Changes in the operation of schools can help some children perform better socially and academically. Second,

when we cannot change risk factors such as the presence of fetal alcohol syndrome<sup>5</sup> or chronically abusive parenting, our only option is to identify at-risk youth and prescribe protective measures. For example, intensive education programs can moderate some of the effects of FAS and if parents cannot or will not provide them with love and support, these must be provided in other settings. The importance of an environment that mitigates the impact of risk factors is suggested by research such as that cited by Reiss and Roth (1993) who conclude that children affected by prenatal trauma or pregnancy complications will only have higher than normal rates of violence if they are raised in unstable homes.

## **Evidence-Based Crime Prevention: What Do We Know?**

The first step in preventing crime is ensuring that programs address the risk factors that lead to crime. The second is ensuring that prevention programs are based on research demonstrating their effectiveness. In this section, I will discuss the research evaluating programs that have addressed the risk factors for crime and delinquency. Following the lessons learned elsewhere will help to ensure success in preventing crime. However, solutions cannot just be adopted off the shelf. Each community is different, so it is also important that people planning prevention programs first conduct an intensive analysis of their community's problems and resources so that programs can be modified to suit local circumstances.

### **Programs to Improve Parenting**

Many studies have shown the importance of the family in the causation and prevention of crime and delinquency. For example, in their review of research on the predictors of male delinquency, Loeber and Dishion (1983) found that parental family management was the best predictor of delinquency involvement. Other research has found that the strength of family ties, parental supervision and discipline, and the role model provided by parents are all related to delinquency (Linden, 2000).

There have been few evaluations of programs directed at improving parenting. One promising start was made by Gerald Patterson and his colleagues at the Oregon Learning Center. Based on his experiences treating several hundred families of anti-social children and on very detailed observation of interaction patterns within these families, Patterson (1980) concluded that "since anti-social acts that are not punished tend to persist" the key to changing the behaviour of these troublesome children was to teach their parents how to discipline them. This process consisted of teaching parents to (a) monitor the child's behaviour; (b) recognize deviance; and (c) deal with such behaviour.

In a properly functioning family, parents understand this process and the system is activated by the bonds of affection and caring which exist between the parent and the child. The key is not just punishment – it was found that many parents of problem children punished them more often and more harshly than did the parents of normal children. However, the parents of problem children did not know how to punish their children, and punishment actually made things worse.

Working with the families of preadolescent problem children, Patterson developed a program in which parents are taught how to shape their children's behaviour by using non-physical punishments, by rewarding good conduct, and by interacting more positively as a family. The results suggest the program has potential. One evaluation showed that stealing was reduced from an average of 0.83 incidents per week to 0.07 incidents per week. The treatment effects persisted for six months, but by one year stealing rates had gone back to pre-treatment levels (Moore, Chamberlain, & Mukai, 1979). This finding suggests that parental retraining may be necessary.

Patterson's methods were tested among French-speaking Montréal youth by Tremblay et al. (1992). All kindergarten teachers in 53 low-income Montréal schools were asked to rate the disruptive behaviour of their male students. The 30% most disruptive were randomly assigned to a treatment group, a no-contact control group, and an attention-control group. When the boys were entering their second year of elementary school, intervention was provided with parents and in school. Over a two-year period, parents were given an average of 15 parenting training sessions based on Patterson's work. Social skills training was given to the boys in school in small groups of pro-social peers who met 19 times over the two years.

An evaluation of the program was conducted when the boys were 15 years of age. The treated boys showed less self-reported delinquency involvement from ages 10 to 15. While the number of boys charged under the Young Offenders Act was very low (8%) there were no significant differences between treatment and control groups. The program appeared to have other positive effects that diminished over time. Teacher-rated disruptive behaviour was less from ages 10 to 13, but the difference disappeared at 14. School adjustment was also better for the treatment group from ages 10 to 12, but this difference also disappeared. As with Patterson's work, this study suggests that ongoing or repeated training may be needed in order to maintain program effects.

Another study took place in the United Kingdom from 1995 to 1999 (Scott, Spender, Doolan, Jacobs, & Aspland, 2001). This trial involved children from 3 to 8 years of age who were referred to the local mental health service for anti-social behaviour. The program involved small groups of parents who met for two hours each week for three to four months. The parents learned techniques for dealing with their children more effectively and were given tasks to practice at home. Following the intervention, the parents were much more likely than the control parents to use praise rather than inappropriate commands. The children showed major improvement in anti-social behaviour, while the control children showed no change.

A recent development in the treatment of high-risk youth is Multisystemic Therapy (MST). MST is an intensive home-based service that involves the family as well as the other groups that have an influence on the young person, such as the school, the peer group, and the neighbourhood. MST therapists are available 24 hours a day and work very intensively with the youth and his or her family as well as with the other groups. The ultimate goal of MST is to "empower the family to take responsibility for making and maintaining gains.... parents are encouraged to develop the requisite skills to solve their own problems rather than rely on professionals" (Leschied & Cunningham, 2002, p. 9). Evaluation results have been mixed, with several U.S. studies showing significant

reductions in criminality, institutionalization, and drug abuse (Farrington & Welsh, 2003) while other research, including a large randomized trial in London, Ontario (Leschied & Cunningham, 2002), did not show any difference between treated and untreated young people. Where it has been successful, the MST program is very cost-effective. The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (1998) has estimated that MST could potentially result in a net gain of \$21,863 per program participant.

Positive results have also been obtained for a similar program called Functional Family Therapy that also includes a variety of interventions with youth and their families (Surgeon General, 2001). This is a short-term intervention that has lowered rates of offending for foster care and institutional placement by 25% to 60% (Alexander et al., 1998) compared with controls who did not receive the services.

Another important parenting issue concerns foster care, as a relatively high proportion of children in trouble are also in care. One improvement is making foster care more stable. It is not uncommon to encounter young people who have lived in ten or more foster care homes. Foster parents need to be trained and monitored and support should be provided so that children can stay with the same foster parents until they can return to their natural parents or live on their own. Several communities in the United States have implemented a Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care program for chronic young offenders, which is similar to the MST program discussed earlier. Those responsible for this program work with foster parents, biological parents, and with the young people themselves. An important component of this program is the role played by a community liaison worker who coordinates the different people and agencies involved with each young person (Surgeon General, 2001). Compared with a control group, participants in this project were less likely to use hard drugs, were only one-third as likely to run away from their programs, and had 60% fewer arrests in the 12 months following the program (Chamberlain & Mihalic, 1998).

Several studies have focused on prenatal and perinatal parenting. Although delinquency was not used as an outcome measure in most of these studies, the research did show that some of the programs reduced risk factors, so they at least have a potential impact on delinquency. In the best known of these studies, Olds et al. (1997, 1998) studied the effect of a home visit program in Rochester, New York. Nurses made home visits every two weeks to a treatment group of mothers who had one or more of the following problems: young age, single-parent status, or low socio-economic status. Families were randomly assigned to treatment or control groups. One treatment group received prenatal care home visits and postnatal transportation for care; a second treatment group received biweekly visits until the child was 2 years of age. The program was very comprehensive and dealt with a variety of health and social issues including trying to involve the mothers' friends and relatives and to refer families to medical and social service agencies.

A 46-month follow-up demonstrated that the home visits had an impact on a wide range of outcomes. The visited mothers were less likely to punish their children, had fewer hospital emergency visits, and had fewer episodes of child maltreatment than the control mothers. The visited mothers also had better employment records and fewer subsequent pregnancies. A subsequent 15-year follow-up found that the postnatal visit

group showed significantly lower levels of neglect and child abuse. The mothers in this group also had fewer subsequent births, lower need for Aid for Dependent Children, and less use of alcohol and illegal drugs (Olds et al., 1997). The program also had a significant impact on the criminal and anti-social behaviour of the children (Olds et al., 1998). The children in the postnatal visitation program had fewer instances of running away, fewer reported criminal violations, arrests<sup>6</sup> and convictions, and lower rates of consumption of cigarettes and alcohol. Parents reported their children had fewer alcohol and drug-related problems than those in the comparison group.

The programs discussed here suggest that it is possible to improve parenting skills and to support parents who may be having a difficult time coping with the simultaneous demands of poverty, isolation, and child-rearing<sup>7</sup>. However, this is not a problem that can be considered apart from other social ills. One cannot separate parenting from other issues related to resources and skills. For example, many persistent delinquents come from single-parent families typically headed by females. Even if parenting skills could be taught, it can be extremely difficult for a poor parent, acting on her or his own, to effectively manage a household consisting of several children without outside help. Currie (1985) has pointed out that the relationship between broken homes and crime is due to the history of conflict prior to the break, and to the fact that the parent with custody of the children may lack the financial resources and support systems to do an adequate job of child rearing. Thus family problems may be caused outside the family and may be amenable to change if support programs are provided. In a similar vein, Wilson (1982) has concluded that poor supervision on the part of parents is a result of chronic stress, unemployment, disabilities, and poverty. Thus the ineffectiveness of parents who do not properly supervise their children may itself be a result of the parents' social situation. Programs such as Big Brothers, Big Sisters have demonstrated that they can be successful in providing extra support for single parents. An evaluation of the Big Brothers, Big Sisters Program showed that young people who had been in the program for 18 months were less likely to use drugs and alcohol or to hit someone, and had better relationships with parents, peers, and their schools than young people in the control group (McGill, Mihalic, & Grotpeter, 1998).

Research by Furstenberg (1993) has added a new dimension to the relationship between parenting and crime. He observed that in our society parenting is viewed as a very private matter. However, his work showed that conditions outside the family interact with parental competence in that where parents live affects how they manage their children. Neighbourhood characteristics such as the availability of resources, the extensiveness of social networks, and social trust all affect the support parents receive. If neighbourhood supports are weak, parents must be highly effective if they are to raise their children successfully. Sampson (1995) also found the importance of a network of families in collectively contributing to the supervision of the community's children. He feels these networks are a form of social capital that contributes to the effective socialization of children. This work suggests that in addition to teaching parenting skills to high-risk families, it is also important to rebuild the neighbourhood social institutions that support families. It is likely that changes in housing and neighbourhood structures will also have an impact on social development factors such as families, education, and employment. Strong communities help their members in many different ways.

The research also speaks to the need for strengthening the family economically. Employment and upgrading training for those who are unemployed or underemployed is a necessary step. Single-parent families and those families in which both parents work, require adequate day care and flexible work schedules. Single mothers, whether employed or at home, may benefit from support programs where they can get child care and counselling. Programs such as communal kitchens, which offer contacts outside the home, can help to break down the isolation that is often a problem for poor single parents, as well as helping with nutrition. Economic problems can also be alleviated if provinces more aggressively pursue maintenance and child support orders against husbands who attempt to avoid paying.

The evidence suggests that it may be possible to improve parenting skills and to support parents who are having a difficult time coping with the simultaneous demands of poverty, isolation, and child rearing. While the research supporting most social development programs, including parenting programs, is limited it does suggest that carefully designed programs do have great potential. However, the research does tell us clearly that unless these interventions are substantial in nature and continued over time, there is no chance they will be effective<sup>8</sup>.

### **Programs to Improve Educational Adjustment and Outcomes**

Like the family, the school plays a major role in socializing young people and is an important predictor of delinquency. The school is a pervasive influence in a child's life. For most of the year, children spend all day in classes and often return to the school after classes to participate in sports and social activities. More importantly, the school is an arena in which a child's performance is constantly being judged. Those who are successful are given prestige by teachers, parents, and other adults, as well as by many of their classmates. Those who do well in school and who enjoy their educational experience are less likely to be involved in delinquency while those who fail and who dislike school are more likely to be involved in delinquency. The correlation between school failure and delinquency is relatively strong and has been replicated in Canada (Gomme, 1985; Kupfer, 1966), Britain (Hargreaves, 1967), and the United States (Hirschi, 1969; Polk & Schafer, 1972). The school has an impact on delinquency in two distinct, but related ways. First, the school is one of the major factors that determine an individual's future social and economic position. Second, the school affects the daily life of the child. For some, the school experience is interesting, pleasant, and enriching. For others, it is irrelevant, degrading, and humiliating. Those who have bad school experiences may react by getting into trouble both inside and outside the school setting.

There are a number of ways in which the school can help to reduce delinquency. There is some evidence that teacher style can play a role in provoking deviance or in obtaining cooperation, and that schools which allow pupils to participate in decision-making will be more successful (Rutter & Giller, 1984). The curriculum and the way it is taught may also make a difference in school performance and delinquency. Weis and Hawkins (1979) have recommended that schools make greater use of such programs as performance-based education, which involves establishing learning goals for each student and developing individual programs with rewards for improvement. They also suggest

the use of cross-age tutoring and other ways of involving students in the operation of the school, thus enhancing their level of commitment.

### Preschool Programs

Recent research tracking subjects from childhood to adolescence has shown the importance of early childhood intervention in reducing delinquency. Tremblay (2000) has summarized these findings:

Children who fail to learn alternatives to physical aggression during the preschool years are at very high risk of a huge number of problems. They tend to be hyperactive, inattentive, anxious, and fail to help when others are in need; they are rejected by the majority of their classmates; they get poor grades; and their behaviour disrupts school activities. They are thus swiftly taken out of their “natural” peer group and placed in special classes, special schools and institutions with other “deviants”, the ideal situation to reinforce marginal behaviour. They are among the most delinquent from pre-adolescence onward, ... the most at risk of dropping out of school ... being violent offenders ... [and] being charged under the Young Offenders’ Act. (p. 23)

One area that appears to have great potential to reduce crime and delinquency is that of preschool programs for children from deprived backgrounds<sup>9</sup>. One of the few programs that has undergone a long-term evaluation is a Michigan program called the Perry Preschool Project. The students were 123 African-American children from poor families. At ages 3 and 4 the children in the program attended a preschool with an active learning curriculum five mornings a week and teachers visited the children’s homes once a week. The program lasted 30 weeks each year. A control group did not receive these services.

The most recent follow-up of the Perry Preschool Project looked at the participants at age 40 (Schweinhart et al., 2005). Far fewer of the program participants than controls had been arrested five or more times (36% versus 55%) and had less than half the arrest rate for drug offences (14% versus 34%). The program group had higher incomes, were more likely to own their own homes, and were less likely to have been on welfare. They had greater educational achievement and lower rates of illiteracy. Program group members were more likely to have had stable marriages and females had lower rates of out-of-wedlock births. The costs of the program were more than recovered because of gains in reduced welfare costs and increased earnings of the graduates. Schweinhart et al. (2005) estimate that the saving was over \$17 for every dollar invested in the program<sup>10</sup>. The researchers responsible for this program suggest that the intervention must be made while the children are young, and must be thorough enough to overcome the range of disadvantages faced by the participants. One very important factor in the success of the program was the fact that it combined education with training and support for the family. Thus the work done in school was reinforced in the home. Several other programs combining these two services also had positive effects (Lally, Mangione, & Honig, 1988; Seitz & Apfel, 1994; and Johnson & Walker, 1987).

Tremblay and Craig (1995) reviewed the results of 13 educational prevention experiments with delinquency outcomes (including the Perry Preschool study). While most were school- or daycare-based, they typically also involved intervention with parents outside the school setting. Half the studies showed a beneficial impact on delinquency. The success rate was highest for programs for pre-adolescents, with five of the seven programs having lower delinquency rates for program youth than for controls. The successful programs were of long duration – from six months to five years – and involved intense interventions aimed at children, parents, and teachers.

### Programs for Older Children

One of the most common responses to the problems of children and youth is to establish in-school programs to educate students about the nature and consequences of their problem behaviour. Unfortunately, there is little evidence that these educational programs have any positive impact. For example, DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) is the most widely used drug prevention program in schools across North America. However, research has shown that DARE has had no impact on drug use (Surgeon General, 2001; West & O’Neal, 2004). After several years of resisting these findings, the DARE organization is currently evaluating a new DARE program that has taken into account some of the criticisms ([www.D.A.R.E.com](http://www.D.A.R.E.com)).

As Tremblay and Craig (1995) have observed, the evidence shows that preschool programs have been more effective than school-based programs for older children. There is some evidence that alternative classes or schools might be better for high-risk older children. A major review of crime prevention programs conducted for the United States Congress (Sherman et al., 1997) concluded that the following types of programs had an impact on delinquency: (a) programs that build school capacity to initiate and to sustain innovation; (b) programs that effectively communicate appropriate behavioural norms; and (c) programs that teach social competency skills such as problem solving, communication skills, and decision-making. Outside the immediate school environment, mentoring programs have also shown some success (Sherman et al., 1997). School-based peer programs such as peer counselling and peer mediation have been found to be ineffective at reducing youth violence and other risk factors. However, cross-age tutoring programs in which older children tutor younger ones have led to academic gains for both groups (Surgeon General, 2001).

As with parenting programs, evaluations of school-based programs show that multi-faceted programs are the most likely to be effective. For example, work continues on the implementation and evaluation of three school-based programs designed for young people aged 6 to 12. These were the Success for All Program, the Fast Track Project, and the Seattle Social Development Project (Howell & Hawkins, 1998).

The Success for All curriculum is enriched in many ways and special help is quickly provided to children who are having difficulties ([www.successforall.net](http://www.successforall.net)). There is also a family support team consisting of a variety of helping professionals who work with the parents to teach them to support the efforts of the school and who provide support to children and to families. Program evaluations showed the program was successful in improving academic achievement (Borman & Hewes, 2001). While no conduct measures

were reported, this improved academic achievement may have an impact on delinquency.

The Fast Track Project ([www.fasttrackproject.org](http://www.fasttrackproject.org)) is designed to serve high-risk children in high-crime communities. Like the other successful intervention programs, the Fast Track Project is multi-faceted. Teachers try to improve thinking processes and emotional and problem solving skills; parents are trained to reinforce the lessons from the school and to better manage their children's behaviour; and positive peers are involved in social and academic activities. The intervention was very intensive and continued for five years. Research summarized on the project website indicates that:

Significant progress was made toward the goal of improving competencies of the children receiving intervention services and their parents. Compared to the control group, the intervention children improved their social-cognitive and academic skills, and their parents reduced their use of harsh discipline. These group differences also were reflected in behavioral improvements during the elementary school years and beyond. Compared with children in the control group, children in the intervention group displayed significantly less aggressive behavior at home, in the classroom, and on the playground. By the end of third grade, 37 percent of the intervention group had become free of conduct problems, in contrast with 27 percent of the control group. By the end of elementary school, 33 percent of the intervention group had a developmental trajectory of decreasing conduct problems, as compared with 27 percent of the control group. Furthermore, placement in special education by the end of elementary school was about one-fourth lower in the intervention group than in the control group (Fast Track, 2010).

This improvement continued into adolescence. By the eighth grade there were modestly favourable differences between participants and controls in arrest rates and substantial differences in serious conduct disorders.

The Seattle Social Development Project (<http://depts.washington.edu/ssdp>) is also a school-based program with several components. These include training teachers in classroom management and effective instruction, helping children to develop a variety of learning and coping skills, and training parents in behaviour management and academic support (Howell & Hawkins, 1998). The program has been evaluated since the early 1980s. Positive long-term outcomes include: reducing anti-social behaviour including drug abuse; improving academic skills, attachment to school, and school behaviour; and increasing bonding to conventional others.

Finally, the Quantum Opportunities Program is a program for older students. The program encourages disadvantaged young people to complete high school and to go on to post-secondary education. The Quantum program is very intensive, involving 750 hours per year over a four-year period. Program activities include tutoring, computer skills training, life skills training, and community service. Participants received a small hourly stipend for their time and some financial support for post-secondary education. The program had very positive educational outcomes and male controls had six times more convictions than program participants (Lattimore, Mihalic, Grotjeter, & Taggart, 1998).

A subsequent evaluation was not nearly as positive and showed no impact on crime. In fact, program participants had higher rates of drinking and drug use than controls<sup>11</sup> (Maxfield, Schirm, & Rodriquez-Planas, 2003). However, the evaluators found that the replication sites did not implement the program as intensively as had been done in the pilot program. Because of the potential of the program, the Eisenhower Foundation has funded another replication. While the implementation is not yet complete, initial results are once again quite positive (Eisenhower Foundation, 2006).

As with parenting, there is an obvious connection between education and broader community issues. The community finances the education system and instills general attitudes about the role and value of education that affect students' attitudes toward learning. The schools also rely on the community to reinforce the lessons and values they teach. For example, housing policy can be a critical factor in education, as unstable housing can be very detrimental to learning. In the inner city Winnipeg School Division, 22% of students changed schools at least once during the 1994-95 year. One school had a 44% turnover among its 500 students. This obviously makes the classroom situation very difficult for students and teachers and can also be emotionally trying for students who are constantly losing friends, trying to fit into a new environment, and struggling to catch up with the disrupted studies. Housing and foster parenting policies that reduce this turnover can be beneficial to children and the community in many ways, including reductions in crime.

## Employment

While research clearly shows that positive experiences at home and in school reduce the likelihood of delinquency, the link between employment and crime is less clear. For example, there is no consistent pattern in the relationship between employment rates and crime rates. That is, an increase in the rate of unemployment does not necessarily translate into a corresponding increase (or decrease) in the crime rate. Further, the evidence indicates that having a job does not constrain high-risk offenders from committing criminal acts. In his review of the research concerning the relationship between crime and employment, Currie (1985) concludes that, "...it is not just the fact of having or not having a job that is most important, nor is the level of crime most strongly or consistently affected by fluctuations in the national unemployment rate. The more consistent influence is the *quality* of work – its stability, its level of pay, its capacity to give the worker a sense of dignity and participation..." (p. 116).

Even this conclusion is based on very limited research, as it is very difficult to isolate the effects of employment on behaviour. By the time they get to the age of employment, many high-risk youth have already had serious criminal involvement, and behaviour patterns have been established which can be very difficult to end. If a youth has a lengthy record of serious offences, a limited education, and poor work habits, it is difficult to find anyone willing to give him or her the kind of meaningful work described by Currie. However, it does seem apparent that the short-run training and job placement programs, which are most commonly used, are ineffective (McGahey & Jeffries, 1985).

While the research correlating crime with unemployment rates and looking at the impact of jobs on an individual's involvement in crime are not conclusive, there is

substantial evidence that inequality is related to crime. A number of researchers have documented the fact that serious violent crime is correlated with the inequality of income in a city. Further, there is also evidence that serious crime is most likely to be committed by those at the bottom of the social class ladder and that crime rates are highest in neighbourhoods with high unemployment (McGahey, 1986). Economic inequality is also linked with racial inequality – the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in the Canadian criminal justice system is due both to their position at the bottom of the class system and to the history of racism that is a major cause of their poverty.

The policy implications of the research on the economic correlates of crime are simple to state, but difficult to implement. The research tells us to reduce the inequality of incomes, to minimize the effects of racism, and to provide meaningful and stable jobs for as many people as possible. These are difficult tasks in a world where most new jobs are in the service industry and where global competition puts pressure on companies to reduce wages and to keep the labour force as small as possible.

One large-scale study has examined the impact of the provision of employment assistance to disadvantaged young people. The U.S. Job Corps Program is a national program for disadvantaged young people between the ages of 16 and 24. It is a residential program that offers a broad range of training in academic, vocational, and life skills as well as transition and job placement assistance after graduation. In addition to its other benefits, including increased employment and earnings compared with control groups, the Job Corps Program also had an impact on crime. The evaluators found that there were 100 fewer arrests per 1,000 participants in the program and that program participants were also less likely themselves to be victimized by crime (McConnell & Glazerman, 2001).

## Recreation

While many people assume that recreation programs will prevent crime, there is surprisingly little evidence supporting this belief. In fact, a U.S. Congressional review pointed out that recreation programs may actually increase criminality if high-risk youth are allowed to mix with low-risk youth without a strong intervention to establish positive group norms (Sherman et al., 1997). Regular supervision may help some high-risk young people, but children most in need of help are also the most unlikely to choose to participate in these programs.

The limited research that is available does suggest that recreational programs will not be effective unless they are very intensive. That is, a program that involves young people for an hour or two a week will not be effective. There is some evidence that programs such as Outward Bound, which allow youth to test themselves in a wilderness setting, may help. In Manitoba, the summer fly-in sports camps run by University of Manitoba physical education students on reserves in Northern Manitoba showed significant declines in crime rates compared with reserves that did not have the programs (Murray, 1993). This program involved very intensive recreation activities that were run over an entire summer. Finally, the Congressional review found that after-school recreation programs operating in high-crime areas by community-based organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs may have a positive impact on crime, but here again the

intervention must be substantial if it is to have any effect (Sherman et al., 1997).

An Ottawa study also provides evidence that properly run recreation programs can have an impact. For almost three years, low-income children 5 to 15 years of age living in a public housing project took part in an intensive after-school program that offered sports, music, dancing, and scouting. The children were compared with young people in another public housing project with minimal services. Arrests in the program site declined by 75% compared with the two years prior to the program while they rose by 67% in the comparison site. However, within 16 months after the program ended, these positive effects had worn off (Jones & Offord, 1989, as cited in Howell, 1995, p. 95).

Another program that shows the benefits of recreational programming is Britain's Youth Inclusion Program, which uses recreation as one element of a more comprehensive intervention (Morgan Harris Burrows, 2003). This program was implemented in 70 of the most deprived communities in England and Wales. Program staff identified the "top 50" young people in each neighbourhood based on a risk assessment process and asked them and their parents to become involved in the program. Other young people who were not assessed as being in the "top 50" were also allowed to participate in the program. On average, the "top 50" were involved in 10 hours of activities per week. The most common activity was sports, but young people were also involved in many other things including mentoring, family projects, education and training, health and drug education, arts and cultural activities, and environmental activities. While the evaluation did not include a control group, the results were quite promising. Arrest rates dropped by 65% for the "top 50" young people who stayed actively involved with the program compared with a drop of 44% for those identified as being in the "top 50" who were not engaged in the program. The offences for which program participants were arrested were less serious than the offences they committed prior to the program.

## **Neighbourhood Revitalization**

In their discussion of the Merrill neighbourhood in Beloit, Wisconsin, Weisel and Harrell (1996) have drawn a poignant picture of a community in decline:

In this all-too-common story, areas once home to stable families, manifesting the vibrant spirit of community associated with the traditional American neighborhood, enter a downward spiral of decay typified by declining housing stock, the frequent abandonment of dwellings, or a proliferation of properties allowed by absentee landlords to deteriorate and become overgrown with weeds. These neighborhoods gradually begin to show other signs of neglect, such as trash and litter, abandoned cars, and gang graffiti defacing walls.

Most conspicuous in such communities is the absence of normal neighborhood activity: There are no children on the playgrounds and no older people sitting on their porches. Instead, seemingly ubiquitous groups of young men congregate idly on street corners. Taken together, these components too often constitute the visible indicators of rising crime and fear. (p. 18)

The connection between the social condition of a neighbourhood and crime was drawn decades ago by researchers such as Shaw and McKay (1942) who attributed the high rates of crime in slum communities to the failure of neighbourhood institutions including families, schools, and churches, to provide adequate social controls. Shaw and McKay established the Chicago Area Project to assist local residents to work together to improve the manner in which their communities were organized. A number of more recent attempts at crime reduction have followed this tradition. Most notably, in Britain the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO) used a community development approach to deal with crime on housing estates in England and Wales. NACRO contended that “crime reduction flows from the structure and communalities that are injected into run-down housing estates; on a well-managed estate with a stable population, there is likely to be a degree of neighbourliness conducive to good neighbour relations. It is argued by many that the gradual development of neighbourly behaviour and informal networks of support among tenants is the most effective deterrent of anti-social behaviour” (Safe Neighbourhoods Unit, 1993, p. 86).

Typical of the work sponsored by NACRO was the Bushbury Triangle Project in Wolverhampton. The project involved a modernization program, improvements in home security, new fencing, and a variety of community activities run by the residents from a newly designated community house. During the modernization, it became apparent that behaviour on the estate was not improving. Planners realized that the project needed more consultation with the residents so they would develop a sense of ownership of the improvements. To facilitate this ownership, part of the estate – the Triangle – was designated as a separate community and physical changes were made that encouraged pedestrian circulation within this area. These changes appeared to make a substantial difference. Crimes reported to the police dropped by one-third compared with other parts of the estate which had been modernized but which lacked the community component. Victim surveys showed substantial reductions in crime, and crime fear declined by 50%. These findings were also supported by the community response in meetings with small groups of residents and by interviews with officials of various local social agencies.

Another example of neighbourhood change comes from the work of Oscar Newman (1992). Crime had increased dramatically during the 1980s in the Dayton, Ohio neighbourhood of Five Oaks. Five Oaks is a formerly middle-class neighbourhood which had become a favourite commercial location for drug dealers and prostitutes. In 1991 Oscar Newman was hired to help develop a plan to reduce these problems. A planning team, working in consultation with the community and with civic officials, came up with the idea of using street closures and other design changes to divide the area into ten mini-neighbourhoods. Each had three to six streets that could only be accessed through one entry portal; other entrances were blocked by iron gates that could be unlocked for emergency access. Pedestrian access was not affected. Internal streets were redesigned into culs-de-sac. This redesign was intended to make access more difficult for criminals and also to encourage residents to make more use of the area. Other elements involved police cooperation with the community and aggressive action against the prostitutes and dealers, better enforcement of building code regulations (because many houses had been illegally converted to multiple family rental units), and a city program to encourage

residents to own their own homes. The impact of these changes was dramatic. Over a one-year period violent crime dropped by 50%, non-violent crime dropped by 24%, traffic accidents dropped by 40%, and house prices increased by 15%. Residents liked the changes and many noted that resident involvement in the community had increased.

We should not see redesign as a panacea, particularly for very deteriorated, high-crime areas. It may be most useful in neighbourhoods such as Five Oaks which still have some sense of community, high percentages of strong families and home ownership higher than in the city core, and which have the potential to be turned around relatively quickly. One key factor in projects such as Five Oaks is that they involve a rapid and major change, which can help convince residents that their efforts to improve their neighbourhoods are supported and which can help motivate their further efforts.

## Conclusions

The chapters in this volume clearly show that it is not easy to prevent crime. Delinquency and crime do not have simple causes and hence cannot have simple solutions. Put another way, if crime is a result of an interrelationship of the individual with his or her family, school, peer group, and neighbourhood and is influenced by larger forces such as the global economy, then a midnight basketball program (or amendments to the Youth Criminal Justice Act) will not be sufficient to eliminate it.

This chapter has provided some information about the causes of crime and about some of the things that might reduce it. Even though this information is quite accessible, crime prevention programs are rarely based upon evidence that they will have an impact on delinquency and crime. Those responsible for criminal justice policy are reluctant to heed the lessons that we have learned over the years about crime prevention that must be applied if we want to be successful:

**Lesson 1.** Puny interventions will not work. Reducing crime is not easy and it is naïve to believe that underfunded and understaffed prevention programs will have any impact. Evaluation of the multi-site U.S. Weed and Seed Program found that the most successful programs were those that targeted their resources on a limited number of people in a small part of the community (Dunworth & Mills, 1999). A British study looked at 21 burglary prevention programs and found that the more intense the intervention, the more likely it was to have succeeded (Bowers, Johnson, & Hirschfield, 2004).

**Corollary 1.** Social development programs should deal with more than one part of the young person's environment. The most successful education programs had a component that involved the child's family.

**Corollary 2.** Since money is always limited, the best strategy will involve major interventions in small, carefully targeted areas. Interventions are more likely to be successful if they are targeted directly at children and parents rather than at changing community

institutions. Thus programs that foster community empowerment or other process goals will not necessarily have any impact on children in that community (Beauvais & Jenson, 2003).

**Lesson 2.** Short-term programs won't make a lasting difference. Projects that have had short-term funding usually have short-term futures. In his study of community crime prevention programs in Vancouver, Schneider (2004) found that much of the time of program coordinators was spent on fundraising rather than on developing and implementing programs. One of his respondents reported that, "About 75% of my time is spent on fundraising, not on crime prevention" (p. 167). There is no evidence suggesting that underfunded, short-term programs will be successful in reducing crime.

**Lesson 3.** Programs should not be implemented unless there is a reasonable body of evidence suggesting that they are likely to be effective. This should not preclude innovative programs as long as there is a rationale as to why they should be successful. However, these innovative programs should be evaluated.

**Lesson 4.** We should not be doctrinaire about what kinds of programs to adopt. Those wishing to prevent crime must look at all types of programs. There are several reasons why a wide range of options should be considered:

1. Evaluations have shown that a wide variety of programs have been successful in preventing crime. To give just one example, the situational tactic of Caller ID is a much more effective way of quickly reducing the problem of obscene phone calls than any type of social development program.
2. Communities that have high crime rates have a broad range of needs. Any single strategy is quite likely to be swamped by the other things that are taking place in the community.
3. Different types of strategies operate over different time frames. While social development programs are extremely important, they can take years to have an impact on crime rates. People who are afraid to go outside after dark are not going to be satisfied with a prenatal program that might make them safer in 14 years.

On the other hand, situational strategies will not be nearly as effective if nothing is done to reduce the number of motivated offenders. Thus communities should try to use a combination of strategies that have both short-term and long-term outcomes. An example of this kind of programming is the U.S. Weed and Seed Program that combines social development programs with intensive, targeted work by the community and the police to deal with immediate problems.

What should communities do if they wish to make a serious effort to reduce crime? First, they must diagnose their community's problems and try to fix them with solutions that have been demonstrated to be effective. How would we view the competence of

a doctor who treated us without finding out the nature of our problem? Would it be appropriate for a doctor to prescribe a particular treatment without any diagnosis because “everybody else was doing it, or because the government would fund it, or because the pharmaceutical representatives said it was good”? Second, we must take a comprehensive approach to crime prevention. This means that if a community is trying to work with young people, they must address as many facets of their lives as possible. The most successful early intervention programs, such as the Perry Preschool Project, deal with the children’s families as well as with an enriched school program because the family plays such a critical role in reinforcing the school’s lessons. The comprehensive approach also means using as many different types of programs as possible. Auto theft is best addressed by a combination of situational techniques such as mandatory immobilizers, social development programs targeted at youth, efforts by police to shut down chop shops, and inspection by customs to prevent the export of stolen vehicles (Linden & Chaturvedi, 2005).

Finally, most crime prevention efforts are under-resourced and many are funded for short periods of time rather than simply being a part of the way in which communities conduct their affairs. These “puny” interventions are a waste of time and money and have virtually no chance of success. If reducing crime were a simple task, Canada would have become crime-free many years ago.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Other reasons include such things as failure to target programs properly, failure to implement programs, and failure to evaluate programs.

<sup>2</sup> A notable example is the DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) Program which will be discussed later in this paper. Research on DARE showed that the program had no impact on adolescent drug use, but this research was attacked by the program's proponents and tens of millions of dollars continued to be spent on the program each year.

<sup>3</sup> Although Clarke (1995) has suggested a number of situational prevention programs targeted at violent crimes. These include preventing the congregation of people in small areas at pub closing time; controlling items such as guns and knives and substances such as alcohol that facilitate crime; using Caller ID to reduce obscene phone calls; and providing personal alarms to domestic violence victims.

<sup>4</sup> Some researchers disagree with Kelling and Sousa (e.g., Rosenfield, Fornango, & Baumer, 2005).

<sup>5</sup> This is not to say that working with future mothers will not reduce the incidence of FAS/FAE. Here I am referring to children who already suffer from FAS/FAE which is not reversible.

<sup>6</sup> According to Farrington and Welsh (2003), "At the age of 15, children of the higher risk mothers who received the program incurred fewer arrests than their control counterparts (20 as opposed to 45 per 100 children)" (p. 136).

<sup>7</sup> While this study was successful, Bernazzani, Côté, and Tremblay (2001) reviewed several other studies in this area that were less successful. Their conclusion is that more research is required before we can conclude that parent training programs will reduce delinquency.

<sup>8</sup> For example, Latimer (2001) has shown that while family intervention treatment did help to reduce the recidivism of young offenders, the effect was inversely related to the power of the evaluation. That is, the more rigorous the research design, the less likely programs were to show positive effects.

<sup>9</sup> Five daycare/preschool programs met the criteria for inclusion in the Farrington and Welsh meta-analysis. Four of these programs reported successful interventions (Farrington & Welsh, 2003).

<sup>10</sup> An earlier evaluation of the Perry Preschool Project was the source of the often-made claim that "research shows every dollar spent on crime prevention will save seven dollars". This claim should be limited to this particular program because many crime prevention programs do not save any money and others may be more or less cost-effective than the Perry Preschool Project.

<sup>11</sup> The evaluators suggest this may have been the result of under-reporting of drug and alcohol use by controls.

## References

Alexander, J., Barton C., Gordon, D., GrotPeter, J., Hansson, K., Harrison, R., et al. (1998). *Functional family therapy* (Vol. 3, Blueprints for violence prevention series). Boulder, CO: Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, University of Colorado.

Anderson, E. (1998). The social ecology of youth violence. In M. Tonry & M. H. Moore (Eds.), *Youth violence* (pp. 65-104). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Beauvais, C., & Jenson, J. (2003). *The well-being of children: Are there “neighbourhood effects”*. Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks.

Bernazzani, O., Côté, C., & Tremblay, R. E. (2001, November). Early parent training to prevent disruptive behavior problems in children. In D. Farrington & B. Welsh (Eds.), *What works in preventing crime: Systematic reviews of experimental and quasi-experimental research* (Special Edition of The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 578, pp. 90-103). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Borman, G. D., & Hewes, G. M. (2001). *The long-term effects and cost-effectiveness of Success for All*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University.

Bowers, K. J., Johnson, S. D., & Hirschfield, A. (2004). The measurement of crime prevention intensity and its impact on levels of crime. *British Journal of Criminology*, 44, 419-440.

Chamberlain, P., & Mihalic, S. (1998). *Multidimensional treatment foster care* (Vol. 8, Blueprints for violence prevention series). Boulder, CO: Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, University of Colorado.

Clarke, R. V. (1995). Situational crime prevention. In M. Tonry & D. P. Farrington (Eds.), *Building a safer society: Strategic approaches to crime prevention* (pp. 91-150). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Clelland, D., & Carter, T. (1980, November). The new myth of class and crime. *Criminology*, 18, 319-336.

Currie, E. (1985). *Confronting crime: An American challenge*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Dunworth, T., & Mills, G. (1999). *National evaluation of Weed and Seed*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice.

Eisenhower Foundation. (2006). Replicating and evaluating: Quantum Opportunities Program. Retrieved October 24, 2006, from <http://www.eisenhowerfoundation.org/qop.php>.

Farrington, D. P., & Welsh, B. (2003). Family-based prevention of offending: A meta-analysis. *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 36(2), 127-151.

Fast Track Project. (2010). Overview. Retrieved January 8, 2010 from <http://www.fasttrackproject.org/index.html>.

## Crime Prevention and Community Safety for Children and Youth in Canada

Furstenberg, F. F. (1993). How families manage risk and opportunity in dangerous neighborhoods. In W. J. Wilson (Ed.), *Sociology and the public agenda* (pp. 231-258). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Gomme, I. (1985). Predictors of status and criminal offences among male and female adolescents in an Ontario community. *Canadian Journal of Criminology*, 26, 147-159.

Hargreaves, D. H. (1967). *Social relations in a secondary school*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Hirschi, T. (1969). *Causes of delinquency*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Howell, J. C. (1995). *Guide for implementing the comprehensive strategy for serious, violent, and chronic juvenile offenders*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

Howell, J. C., & Hawkins, J. D. (1998). Prevention of youth violence. In M. Tonry & M. H. Moore (Eds.), *Youth violence* (pp. 263-315). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Huizinga, D. (1997, November). The volume of crime by gang and non-gang members. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Society of Criminology, San Diego, CA.

Johnson, D. L., & Walker, T. (1987). Primary prevention of behavior problems in Mexican American children. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 15, 375-385.

Kelling, G. L., & Sousa, W. H., Jr. (2001). *Do police matter? An analysis of the impact of New York's policing reforms*. New York: The Manhattan Institute.

Kupfer, G. (1966). *Middle class delinquency in a Canadian city*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Department of Sociology, University of Washington, Seattle.

Lally, J. R., Mangione, P. L., & Honig, A. S. (1988). The Syracuse University family development project: Long-range impact of an early intervention with low-income children and their families. In D. R. Powell (Ed.), *Annual advances in applied developmental psychology* (pp. 79-104). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Latimer, J. (2001). A meta-analytic examination of youth delinquency, family treatment, and recidivism. *Canadian Journal of Criminology*, 43(2), 237-253.

Lattimore, C., Mihalic, S. F., Grotjeter, J., & Taggart, R. (1998). *Quantum Opportunities Program* (Vol. 4, Blueprints for violence prevention series). Boulder, CO: Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, University of Colorado.

Leschied, A. W., & Cunningham, A. (2002). *Seeking effective interventions for serious young offenders: Interim results of a four-year randomized study of multisystemic therapy in Ontario, Canada*. London, ON: Centre for Children and Family Services in the Justice System, London Family Court Clinic. Retrieved October 18, 2006 from <http://www.lfcc.on.ca/seeking.html>

Linden, R. (2000). *Criminology: A Canadian perspective* (4th ed.). Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Linden, R. (2004). Social control theory. In R. Linden (Ed.), *Criminology: A Canadian perspective* (pp. 374-406). Toronto: Thomson.

Linden, R., & Chaturvedi, R. (2005). The need for comprehensive crime prevention planning: The case of motor vehicle theft. *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 47(2), 251-270.

Lipsey, M. W., & Derzon, J. H. (1998). Predictors of serious delinquency in adolescence and early adulthood: A synthesis of longitudinal research. In R. Loeber & D. P. Farrington (Eds.), *Serious and violent juvenile offenders: Risk factors and successful interventions* (pp. 86-105). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Loeber, R., & Dishion, T. (1983). Early predictors of male delinquency: A review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 94, 68-99.

Maguin, E., & Loeber, R. (1996). Academic performance and delinquency. In M. Tonry (Ed.), *Crime and justice: An annual review of research* (Vol. 20, pp. 145-264). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Maxfield, M., Schirm, A., & Rodriguez-Planas, N. (2003). *The Quantum Opportunity Program demonstration: Implementation and short-term impacts*. Washington, DC: Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.

McConnell, S., & Glazerman, S. (2001). *National Job Corps study: The benefits and costs of Job Corps*. Washington, DC: Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.

McGahey, R. M. (1986). Economic conditions, neighborhood organization, and urban crime. In A. J. Reiss & M. Tonry (Eds.), *Communities and crime* (pp. 231-270). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

McGahey, R. M., & Jeffries, J. (1985). *Minorities and the labor market: Twenty years of misguided policy*. Washington, DC: Joint Center for Political Studies.

McGill, D. E., Mihalic, S. F., & Grotjeter, J. K. (1998). Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (Vol. 2, Blueprints for violence prevention series). Boulder, CO: Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, University of Colorado.

Moffitt, T. E. (1990). Juvenile delinquency and attention deficit disorder: Boys' developmental trajectories from age 3 to age 15. *Child Development*, 61, 893-910.

Moffitt, T. E. (1993). Adolescence-limited and life-course persistent antisocial behavior: A developmental taxonomy. *Psychological Review*, 100, 674-701.

Moore, M. H., & Tonry, M. (1998). Youth violence in America. In M. Tonry & M. H. Moore (Eds.), *Youth Violence* (pp. 1-26). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Moore, D. R., Chamberlain, B. P., & Mukai, L. (1979). Children at risk for delinquency:

## Crime Prevention and Community Safety for Children and Youth in Canada

A follow-up comparison of aggressive children and children who steal. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 7, 345-355.

Morgan Harris Burrows. (2003). *Evaluation of the Youth Inclusion Program*. London: Author.

Murray, J. (1993). *Northern Fly-in Sports Camps Inc.* (1992 program evaluation). Winnipeg: University of Manitoba.

Newman, O. (1992). *Improving the viability of two Dayton communities: Five Oaks and Dunbar Manor*. Great Neck, NY: The Institute for Community Analysis.

Olds, D., Eckenrode, J., Henderson, C. R., Kitzman, H., Powers, J., Cole, R., et al. (1997). Long term effects of home visitation on maternal life course and child abuse and neglect: A fifteen-year follow-up of a randomized trial. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 278(8), 637-643.

Olds, D., Henderson, C. R., Cole, R., Eckenrode, J., Kitzman, H., Luckey, D., et al. (1998). The long-term effects of nurse home visitation and children's criminal and antisocial behavior: 15-year follow-up of a randomized controlled trial. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 280(14), 1238-1244.

Painter, K., & Farrington, D. P. (1997). The crime reducing effect of improved street lighting: The Dudley Project. In R. V. Clarke (Ed.), *Situational crime prevention: Successful case studies* (pp. 209- 226). Albany, NY: Harrow and Heston.

Parks, G. (2000, October). The High/Scope Perry Preschool Project. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Patterson, G. R. (1980). Children who steal. In T. Hirschi & M. Gottfredson (Eds.), *Understanding crime* (pp. 73-90). Beverley Hills, CA: Sage.

Polk, K., & Schafer, W. E. (1972). *Schools and delinquency*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Reiss, A. J., & Roth, J. A. (1993). *Understanding and preventing violence*. Report of the panel on the understanding and control of violent behavior. Washington, DC: National Academy of Sciences.

Rosenbaum, D. (1986). *Community crime prevention: Does it work?* Beverley Hills, CA: Sage.

Rosenfeld, R., Fornango, R., & Baumer, E. (2005). Did Ceasefire, Compstat, and Exile reduce homicide? *Criminology and Public Policy*, 4(3), 419-450.

Rutter, M., & Giller, H. (1984). *Juvenile delinquency: Trends and perspectives*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Safe Neighbourhoods Unit. (1993). *Crime prevention on council estates*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

Sampson, R. (1995). The community. In J. Q. Wilson & J. Petersilia (Eds.), *Crime* (pp. 193-216). San Francisco: ICS Press.

Sampson, R., Raudenbush, S. W., & Earls, F. (1997). Neighborhoods and violent crime: A multilevel study of collective efficacy. *Science*, 277(5330), 918-924.

Schneider, S. (2004). *Refocusing crime prevention: Collective action and the quest for community*. Unpublished Manuscript. Halifax, NS: St. Mary's University.

Schweinhart, L. J., Montie, J., Zongping, X., Barnett, W. S., Belfield, C.R., & Nores, M. (2005). *Lifetime effects: The High/Scope Perry Preschool study through age 40*. Ypsilanti, MI: The High/Scope Press.

Scott, S., Spender, Q., Doolan, M., Jacobs, B., & Aspland, H. (2001, July). Multicentre controlled trial of parenting groups for childhood anti-social behaviour in clinical practice. *British Medical Journal*, 323, 194-198.

Shaw, C., & McKay, H. (1942). *Juvenile delinquency and urban areas*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Sherman, L., Gottfredson, D., MacKenzie, D., Eck, J., Reuter, P., & Bushway, S. (1997). *Preventing crime: What works, what doesn't, what's promising: A report to the United States Congress*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice.

Seitz, V., & Apfel, N. (1994). Parent-focused intervention: Diffusion effects on siblings. *Child Development* 65, 667-683.

Surgeon General. (2001). *Youth violence: A report of the Surgeon General*. Washington, DC: Author.

Thomas, E. M. (2004). *Aggressive behaviour outcomes for young children: Change in parenting environment predicts change in behaviour*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.

Thornberry, T. P., Krohn, M. D., Lizotte, A. J., & Chard-Wierschem, D. (1993). The role of juvenile gangs in facilitating juvenile behaviour. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 30(1), 55-87.

Tremblay, R. (2000). The origins of youth violence. *Isuma*, 1(Autumn), 19-24.

Tremblay, R., & Craig, W. M. (1995). Developmental crime prevention. In M. Tonry & D. P. Farrington (Eds.), *Building a safer society: Strategic approaches to crime prevention* (pp. 151-236). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Tremblay, R., Vitaro, F., Bertrand, L., LeBlanc, M., Beauchesne, H., Boileau, H., et al. (1992). Parent and child training to prevent early onset of delinquency: The Montréal longitudinal-experimental study. In J. McCord & R. E. Tremblay (Eds.), *Preventing anti-social behavior: Interventions from birth through adolescence* (pp. 117-138). New York: Guilford.

## Crime Prevention and Community Safety for Children and Youth in Canada

Waller I. (2006). *Less law, more order: The truth about reducing crime*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Washington State Institute for Public Policy. (1998). *Watching the bottom line: Cost-effective interventions for reducing crime in Washington*. Olympia, WA: Washington State Institute for Public Policy.

Weis, J. G., & Hawkins, J. D. (1979). *Preventing delinquency: The social development approach*. Seattle: Center for Law and Justice, University of Washington.

Weisel, D. L., & Harrell, A. (1996, August). Crime prevention through neighborhood revitalization: Does practice reflect theory? *National Institute of Justice Journal*, 231, 18-23.

West, S. L., & O'Neal, K. (2004). Project DARE outcome effectiveness revisited. *American Journal of Public Health*, 94(6), 1027-1029.

Wilson, H. (1982). Delinquency and public housing: Initiatives for future research. In M. Hough & P. Mayhew (Eds.), *Crime and public housing: Proceedings of a workshop held in September, 1980* (Research and Planning Unit Paper 6). London: Home Office.

## CHAPTER 4

# CREATING SAFER COMMUNITIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH: THE ROLE OF THE POLICE IN CRIME PREVENTION

Tullio Caputo and Michel Vallée

**Abstract:** The authors examine the role of the police in crime prevention in the Canadian context, based on in-depth interviews with police officers in six police agencies across the country. They explore core policing functions and consider the role of the police in crime prevention. They discuss three recent studies of crime prevention practices in Canada, and focus in particular on Crime Prevention through Social Development (CPSD). The authors conclude that social development issues are not often seen as part of a core policing function. They argue that the police are in a unique position with respect to CPSD since they are well positioned to facilitate an integrated, multi-agency response to social problems. An alternative role for the police is discussed which would consolidate their law enforcement and crime prevention roles through the facilitation of an integrated problem solving approach based on partnerships with other service agencies.

A number of recent studies have examined the role of Canadian police agencies in crime prevention including programs and activities aimed at youth. In this chapter, we consider several types of crime prevention and then present a brief overview of recent Canadian research describing the role of the police in crime prevention. We then discuss the results of our own research on this subject that is based on interviews with police officers at different ranks, from six police agencies across the country. We conclude by considering the role that the police *could* play in crime prevention and how this might influence the future of policing in this country.

### Crime Prevention Strategies

It is clear that the police in Canada have a long history of involvement in crime prevention activities (Vallée, 2010). Beginning with initial efforts at preventing previous offenders from reoffending, police involvement in crime prevention today encompasses a wide array of programs and activities. Sherman et al. (1997) identify the following as major varieties of crime prevention:

1. Numbers of Police
2. Rapid Response
3. Random Patrols
4. Directed Patrols

5. Reactive Arrests
6. Proactive Arrests
7. Community Policing
  - a. Neighbourhood Watch
  - b. Community-based Intelligence
  - c. Police information about crime
  - d. Police Legitimacy
8. Problem-oriented Policing
  - a. Criminogenic commodities
  - b. Converging Offenders and Victims

Many of these reflect routine police practices such as Random Patrols. Defined in this way, almost *everything* the police do could be considered crime prevention. In this chapter, we take a different approach. We are concerned with activities that have specifically defined and explicit crime prevention objectives. Defined in this way, the only explicit crime prevention program included in the above list is Neighbourhood Watch. The rest of the activities contribute to or represent traditional policing practices. Even Community Policing can be considered as an approach to policing rather than a crime prevention strategy. Thus, whether the quality and quantity of police-community contacts affects the level of crime in a community is the type of empirical question that Sherman and his colleagues are interested in. For our purposes, however, police-community relations are not primarily intended as a means of undertaking crime prevention. Rather, they represent a broader approach to the way policing services are designed and delivered.

The types of explicit crime prevention activities we have in mind include: (a) situational crime prevention strategies, of which target hardening and environmental design are important examples; (b) community crime prevention strategies, of which Neighbourhood Watch is an important example; and (c) Crime Prevention through Social Development, of which after-school programs and other recreational programs are examples.

## **Situational Crime Prevention Strategies**

Situational crime prevention strategies are based on a concern with the immediate context within which crimes occur. They attempt to reduce the opportunity for crime, make the proceeds of crime less appealing, or make committing a crime potentially more expensive than it is worth. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways. For example, a common situational crime prevention strategy involves “target hardening” which is based on protecting the intended targets of crime through such measures as installing new and more effective locks. Other examples include social marketing campaigns to remind people to lock their cars, not to leave valuables in clear view, and not leave their keys in the ignition.

Situational strategies also promote increased surveillance to deter potential criminals. Installing Closed Circuit Television cameras reflects this surveillance component of situational crime prevention. The objective is to deter criminals by increasing the likelihood that they will be caught and prosecuted.

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) is another popular approach that incorporates situational crime prevention principles. In this case, efforts to reduce opportunities for crime are considered with respect to design features of the built environment. Sightlines, lighting, access/egress points, and places to hide are all taken into account and altered to make the environment less attractive to would-be criminals. Notions of “defensible space” inform this approach and “safety audits” are performed to assess both public and private spaces for crime prevention purposes.

Other examples of situational crime prevention include: vehicle protection strategies (such as steering wheel locks, alarm systems, and vehicle tracking systems); Operation Identification in which private property is marked with the owner’s identification to make it more difficult for thieves to sell, thereby making the property less attractive to steal; and Crime Stoppers which provides an anonymous “tip line” and rewards for information. Each of these examples of situational crime prevention requires a great deal of police involvement. In many cases, the police are the key players in programs such as Operation Identification and Crime Stoppers. They are typically involved in establishing them, mobilizing community support, and providing the administration, training, and information required to keep them going. It is doubtful whether these types of programs could operate in the absence of direct police involvement and ongoing support.

## **Community Crime Prevention Strategies**

Community crime prevention, or neighbourhood crime prevention as it is often called, focuses on local identifiable entities such as neighbourhoods even when implemented on a city-wide basis. Community crime prevention can take a variety of forms and include numerous techniques. Examples of community crime prevention include Neighbourhood Watch, neighbourhood advocacy, Citizens On Patrol, and police-community involvement projects. Community crime prevention strategies seek to directly influence the levels of crime and fear of crime by helping to increase social cohesion in neighbourhoods in crisis and to provide them with increased social support and capacity to respond to crime.

## **Crime Prevention through Social Development**

Over the past 15 years, Crime Prevention through Social Development (CPSD) has gained increasing support and popularity in Canada, including within the police community. This approach to crime prevention is premised on going beyond dealing with immediate factors and addressing the root causes of crime. Most proponents of CPSD recognize the need for a balanced approach that includes elements of law enforcement, situational crime prevention, and CPSD. However, they emphasize the importance of addressing root causes including the social, economic, and political factors that contribute to crime. Root causes include such structural variables as poverty, unemployment, and marginalization, as well as a lack of social, recreational,

and educational opportunities. Attempts to address these structural variables often require the cooperation of a variety of players in community-based, multi-agency, interdisciplinary responses. Thus, for example, after-school programs that attempt to provide a safe and pro-social environment for young people can reflect a CPSD approach. Such programs can include the participation of community members, community agencies such as the YM/YWCA or the Boys and Girls Club, schools, and the police. The objective is to provide young people with opportunities for safe and healthy recreation during a time when many of them are unsupervised and at risk of involvement in dangerous or illegal behaviour.

## Recent Studies of Crime Prevention in Canada

The overview presented above provides a brief description of various types of crime prevention activity. During the past few years, several research projects examining crime prevention practices in Canada have been completed. Three are of particular relevance here since they provide some insights into the nature and extent of crime prevention activity. Furthermore, they contain information regarding police involvement in crime prevention. These include a study by Jamieson, Beals, Lalonde & Associates (2000) undertaken for the federal Department of Justice. A second study by Arcand and Cullen (2004) from Arcand and Associates was conducted for Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada. Finally, we review the results of a study conducted by Jamieson and Hart (2003) for the Caledon Institute of Social Policy that was sponsored by the National Crime Prevention Centre.

The study by Jamieson, Beals, Lalonde & Associates (2000) was designed to examine crime prevention practices in communities of different sizes and from all regions of the country. For this study, 172 in-depth interviews were conducted in 29 Canadian communities with key informants from a variety of sectors including: community or non-governmental organizations (including community service organizations, women's organizations and shelters, and family-oriented services); governments (primarily municipal); police agencies; schools; health services; Aboriginal organizations; and the private sector.

This study found that communities had community crime prevention, situational, educational, and CPSD crime prevention activities underway. They report that, "while there were many different types of CPSD activities identified, most involved some form of education such as the school based VIP program or crime prevention seminars and workshops for seniors, the business community and other community groups" (Jamieson, Beals, Lalonde & Associates, 2000, p. 23). The study goes on to note that the police are the major participant and sponsor of crime prevention activity in Canada:

The police were identified as delivering the most programs in 24 of the 29 communities in the study sample. They were, by far, the most prominent group involved in crime prevention activity in the communities we canvassed. Besides being directly involved in providing various types of crime prevention activities, the police often initiated community actions. They were also supportive of the efforts of others in their communities involved in preventing crime. (p. 25)

Even in situations where they didn't deliver most programs, the police were closely involved with the groups or agencies that did. The respondents in this study also reported that in some communities, police officers had started programs for youth including youth centres. They also pointed out that police officers often volunteered their time and resources to help ensure the success of these youth centres.

Jamieson, Beals, Lalonde & Associates (2000) make clear that the police in Canada are actively involved in situational, community, and CPSD. Some questions remain, however, about the specific role of the police in Crime Prevention through Social Development. For example, to what extent do police crime prevention activities help to address the underlying structural factors that are related to the root causes of crime? Specifically, how do their actions address structural variables like poverty, unemployment, racism, sexism, and other forms of inequality?

Questions can also be raised about the status of educational programs. For example, can educational programs that raise awareness of particular crime threats or which encourage the adoption of pro-social attitudes and behaviour be considered examples of CPSD, or do they represent a separate type of crime prevention activity? The point for us hinges on the extent to which these programs or activities address the underlying, structural causes of crime. From our perspective, while educational programs may be important and useful, it is often difficult to see any link between them and some of the root causes of crime described above such as poverty or unemployment.

The Jamieson, Beals, Lalonde & Associates (2000) study showed that the most common types of CPSD programs or activities in which the police participate are those designed to increase the opportunities for appropriate social and recreational participation such as after-school programs or late night recreational programs for youth such as Night Hoops. The example mentioned above of police officers establishing youth centres and volunteering to help run them represents activity that, for the most part, takes place outside of work hours. Typically, the police are not in the business of operating youth centres and related programs as part of their day-to-day operations. Instead, police agencies are more likely to leave the operation of youth centres to community groups or agencies while they provide some resources and support.

The issue that remains is articulating the role of the police in CPSD. Enhancing social or recreational opportunities available in a community does add to the stock of resources which community members can use. In this sense, these programs are examples of social development. The question is really the nature of police involvement in these and related social development programs. For example, are the police actively involved in designing, developing and, most importantly, delivering these programs? Or do they work with community groups and agencies that actually deliver the programs? If the police don't participate in program delivery but instead support the program by sitting on advisory committees or going to community meetings, does this count as involvement in CPSD? If they are involved in program delivery, then there is no question that they are engaged in CPSD. If, on the other hand, their involvement consists primarily of providing advice and support, are they involved in CPSD?

The second study we examine focuses more directly on the role of the police in CPSD. This study was undertaken by Arcand and Cullen in 2004 for Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada. The definition of CPSD used in this study, states that it is, “an approach that recognizes and works to address the complex social, economic and cultural processes that contribute to crime and victimization” (Arcand & Cullen, 2004, p. 5). Data was collected for this study through a series of searches that were conducted through the following agencies and links, by phone, in print, and electronically: RCMP, Municipal Police Services, Provincial Police Forces, Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, International Crime Prevention Centre, National Crime Prevention Centre, Department of Justice Youth Policy Branch, provincial Crime Prevention organizations, Yukon Justice, Provincial Ministries of Solicitors General, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (B.C.), and the Federal Territorial Provincial Working Group on Community Safety and Crime Prevention. Also included were: Internet research, various sites and links; personal referrals; printed materials: Blue Line Magazine, BCCPA News, Community Justice Links (Yukon) (Arcand & Cullen, 2004, p. 7).

The authors point out that active police participation – in either the organization or delivery of the program – was a key selection criterion for programs to be included in this inventory. They also note that models such as DARE (Drug Awareness and Resistance Education, PARTY (Prevent Alcohol and Risk Related Trauma in Youth), and PEI (Project Early Intervention) were not included since these have already been standardized and are being utilized in communities across the country.

This study provides information on 54 programs drawn from all regions of the country. The following table was adapted from the study to summarize the information it provided on the nature of the programs as well as police involvement.

**Table 1: A Summary of Police Involvement in Crime Prevention Through Social Development Programs and Activities**

Adapted from Arcand and Cullen (2004)

Program Base Activity	Number of Programs	Percent of Total
Education	37	68.5%
Recreation	14	26%
Safety	25	46%
Environment	6	11%
Community Justice	7	13%
Nature of Police Involvement		
Program Operation	19	35%
Community policing duty	32	59%

Program Dynamics		
Police initiated	31	57%
Community initiated	14	26%
Police only	9	17%

\* Note: Percentages may not add to 100 since some programs had more than one activity.

Table 1 shows that over two-thirds of the programs were based on education. It also shows that the crime prevention programs identified by the study were largely undertaken as part of community policing duties. Program dynamics also offer important information since they show that police initiated 57% of the programs, with an additional 17% being police only programs. The community initiated only 26%. A closer examination of the 54 programs described in the study raises a number of important questions about the nature of the programs contained in the inventory and the extent to which they can be considered as CPSD.

The definition we are using in this chapter for Crime Prevention through Social Development relates specifically to addressing the root causes of crime. The definition used in the Arcand and Cullen (2004) study is somewhat different although it does include a reference to the complex social, economic, and cultural processes that contribute to crime and victimization. Even with this more general definition, however, there is some question whether many of the programs described in the study can be considered as examples of CPSD. Importantly, an assessment is provided for each program that highlights its CPSD component.

The programs included in the inventory cover a wide spectrum of activities ranging from those that address the root causes of crime (recreation and community development programs) to others that appear to have little to do with CPSD (bicycle safety, intelligence-led policing program, trail surveillance program). As was the case in the Jamieson, Beals, Lalonde & Associates (2000) study, educational programs and those that are designed to raise awareness and promote pro-social attitudes and behaviour are the most common types of crime prevention programs with police involvement. Table 1 shows that this represented 68.5% of the 54 programs included in the Arcand and Cullen (2004) study. As we argued above, while these may be important and useful programs, they are unlikely to address the structural factors that influence the root causes of crime and victimization. Few of the programs described in this study actually meet the criteria for CPSD according to our definition.

The final study we examine was conducted in 2003 by Jamieson and Hart for the Caledon Institute of Social Policy. The preparation of a Compendium in this study was sponsored by the National Crime Prevention Centre. It was designed to highlight promising practices supported by federal, provincial, and territorial crime prevention initiatives underway in communities across the country. It represents a selection of exemplary programs as opposed to being an inventory of what currently exists. This study does not look specifically at the involvement of police but is important in the context of the current study since the police are mentioned in the description of involved

organizations for each of the jurisdictions. This study is included here, therefore, since it provides useful information on the nature of CPSD programs in Canada and, moreover, provides an additional opportunity to examine how CPSD is being operationalized across the country.

The focus of this study was specifically to describe promising programs that had a CPSD approach (Jamieson & Hart, 2003). The definition of CPSD used in this report states the following:

The social development approach attempts to address the root causes of crime in society. It recognizes that crime stems from a variety of critical experiences in people's lives: family violence; poor parenting; negative school experiences; poor housing; a lack of recreational, health and environmental facilities; inadequate social support; peer pressure; unemployment; and lack of opportunity and poverty. It emphasizes investing in individuals, families and communities by providing social, recreational, educational and economic interventions and support programs for those Canadians, mainly young people, who are most at risk of becoming involved in crime, before they come into conflict with the law. Social development also includes investing in rehabilitative interventions for people who are already involved with the criminal justice system. (p. 3)

This definition is far more extensive than the one we are using in this chapter. While it refers to social development, it includes a number of activities and programs which we would argue fall outside of the social development realm.

The study contains detailed information on 39 crime prevention programs including some from each province and territory. The focus of the programs varied although particular emphasis was placed on programs for children and youth. Of the 39 programs identified, fully 30 had this focus. Four of the programs address the safety of women and girls while four involved community development activities and one addressed family concerns. The main activity in four of the programs was intervention with individuals who were at risk. The remaining 35 programs were almost equally divided among programs that were educational in nature, those that provided recreation and other opportunities (art, music, drama), and those that were aimed primarily at community development. This represents a simplified assessment of the programs outlined in this study since many of them had more than one objective. However, our assessment is based on what appeared to be the main focus of each program.

The 12 educational programs were quite similar to the ones described in the two previous studies we examined since they were primarily designed to teach skills or provide people an opportunity to learn and develop. Similarly, the 11 recreational programs reflect the types of recreational activities found in the studies discussed above. The 12 programs that address community development issues, however, provide some insight into the key aspect of CPSD – namely, social development. Educational programs attempt to encourage social development by working with individuals, changing attitudes, and promoting pro-social behaviour. Recreation programs move

closer to the social development focus of CPSD by increasing available recreational and related opportunities. The extent to which programs are able to achieve a change in the social context is a measure of their ability to achieve social development.

Unlike education and recreation programs, community development and mobilization activities directly address the social, economic, and political factors related to the root causes of crime and victimization. Their focus is on various aspects of the community and their objectives usually involve changing a community to make it a safer and healthier place to live. While the individuals involved or those influenced by the program may also benefit from the experience, the primary target of intervention is social development at the community level.

Jamieson and Hart (2003) include various types of community development projects in their study. One example is similar to those discussed in the studies presented above and involves the establishment of a youth centre. This creates a physical space in the community for young people through which they are provided various opportunities for recreation and social interaction. The creation of a youth centre represents social development since it changes the community in a positive way. Thus, it could be argued that a community is more developed if it has more resources for its citizens. The addition of a youth centre constitutes just such a resource development.

Several other examples from the Compendium show how CPSD can be achieved through community development and mobilization. Typically, these programs involve an assessment stage during which community members come together, identify a problem, and gather the information needed to develop a community response strategy. Once problems are identified and a plan is developed, community resources are mobilized in a collective response. In many cases, these community development and mobilization programs include the cooperation of a broad spectrum of individuals, groups, and organizations in the community including the police. However, these programs are usually housed in and operated by community-based organizations that are responsible for implementing the community plans. Other community groups may provide resources and support but the responsibility for carrying out the activities lies with the community organization.

This raises several important questions related to the role of the police in CPSD. The programs described by Jamieson and Hart (2003) are similar to those outlined by Arcand and Cullen (2004) and Jamieson, Beals, Lalonde & Associates (2000). It is clear that the police can and do play an active role in crime prevention programs that are educational in nature. They are less able to participate directly in recreational programs as part of their day-to-day policing duties unless they are expressly deployed for this purpose, as might be the case for School Liaison/Resource Officers or Community Liaison Officers. This is even more the case for police involvement in community development and mobilization programs. Their involvement in these types of programs usually includes sitting on a community committee and participating in the identification of issues, the collection of information, and the development of community plans. They are less likely to be directly involved in the actual community development and mobilization activities. While we noted that police officers are involved in creating youth centres (which is a community development activity), we argued above that this is likely to be based on

the initiative of a single officer or undertaken as volunteer work during off work hours. Typically, police officers are not engaged in social or community development activities as part of routine police work, and especially the patrol work where a large percentage of police resources are deployed.

In the current policing environment in Canada, CPSD is roughly equated with a proactive approach to policing. For many police officers, a proactive approach is exemplified by problem-oriented policing in a community context. This was reflected in several of the police-sponsored programs described in the three studies discussed above. The logic behind this belief is that the police are proactive when they make an effort to resolve recurring problems. They define problem solving as a way of addressing the root causes of crime. However, as noted several times in our discussion, CPSD involves addressing structural factors such as poverty, inequality, and poor living conditions as root causes of crime. While many in the police community acknowledge the importance of addressing these structural factors, they are limited in what they can do to affect problems such as poverty and unemployment or the lack of social and recreational opportunities. This leads to some debate about what the role of the police should be in crime prevention, particularly in its more proactive version – Crime Prevention through Social Development.

## **The Role of the Police in Crime Prevention: The Perspective of Canadian Police Officers**

In order to explore questions related to the role of the police in crime prevention more directly, a research project was designed to solicit the views of police officers at different ranks and from different communities across Canada. In-depth interviews and focus group sessions were held with police officers in six Canadian police agencies. The six police agencies were selected in consultation with key informants in the police community. A convenience sample was drawn that included police agencies from different regions of the country, of different sizes, and from both urban and rural locations. A rural RCMP detachment was included in order to capture the views of police officers with this type of policing experience. In each agency, we sought the views of police officers at different ranks including front line patrol officers, middle level managers, and senior police executives. As well, interviews were held with crime prevention specialists whenever possible.

The interviews and focus group sessions focused on two main themes. First, we asked the police officers to identify what they considered to be “core” policing functions. Once they had developed a list of core functions, we asked them to rank them in importance. However, in order to make this question more realistic, instead of simply asking them to rank the core functions in order of importance, we asked them to engage in a hypothetical budget cutting exercise. Specifically, we asked them which of the core functions would they cut if they had to deal with an unexpected 25% budget shortfall. This forced them to make difficult choices among those policing functions they had identified as core to their role.

The second theme we explored addressed the role of the police in crime prevention and, in particular, in CPSD. In a series of questions around this theme, we examined the

types of crime prevention activities currently underway in the six participating police agencies. We also discussed the nature and extent of these activities in the context of proactive policing functions. The role of the police as problem solvers and in problem-oriented policing generally was discussed in this context. Specific questions regarding the role of the police in CPSD were also explored as part of this theme, including a consideration of the meaning of the concept of Crime Prevention through Social Development and the responsibility the police have for social development activities. We also discussed how the police role in crime prevention could influence the future of policing in this country.

### **What Constitutes “Core” Policing Functions?**

The first question we explored was what the participants considered to be “core” policing functions. Not surprisingly, we found a great deal of consensus on this issue. The core functions that were identified included responding to emergencies, enforcing the law, and ensuring public safety. Keeping the peace and doing criminal investigations were also seen as core policing functions. Importantly, these functions were often defined in relation to police work done in specific work environments (e.g., downtown versus suburbs, rural versus urban, etc.). These findings were consistent for all six police agencies and across all ranks. In general, the participants expressed a clear sense of responsibility. Indeed, it was obvious that they felt a tremendous obligation and sense of duty to respond if the public needed them.

Interestingly, crime prevention was also identified as a core policing function but usually after the law enforcement and peacekeeping responsibilities mentioned above. Senior officers and crime prevention specialists were more likely to identify crime prevention as a core function than other participants. However, crime prevention was inevitably mentioned as a core policing function in both the interviews and focus group sessions. Crime prevention was also mentioned in the context of the need for police agencies to be involved with their communities including other community agencies.

In order to get the participants to prioritize the core functions, we asked them what they would do if forced to make a 25% budget cut. Since 85% to 90% of police budgets are related to personnel costs, some of the core functions they identified would have to be cut. While this proved to be a difficult exercise for many of the participants, most stated that “soft” policing activities would be given up first. These included such things as school liaison officer programs, community relations officers, and other activities that were not tied directly to responding to calls for service or doing investigations. We were told that cutting entire programs was a preferred strategy to cutting across the board since programs could be brought back if the financial picture improved. The respondents noted that it is harder to get overall budget levels up after they have been cut. It was obvious that many of the participants were familiar with budget cutting realities!

The discussion around budget cuts often turned to the issue of staffing levels. The biggest challenge mentioned by the participants was maintaining the staffing levels needed to respond to calls for service in a timely fashion. While each agency has specialized units, the bulk of the staff in most police agencies is in patrol. Staffing levels

in patrol are usually very tight, especially considering that some people can be away due to illness or training courses. This puts pressure on police organizations since they must comply with safety and health regulations that require certain minimum staffing levels. In some police agencies overtime budgets to meet these minimum staffing requirements can be considerable and run into the millions of dollars.

### What Role do the Police Have in Crime Prevention?

In general, the six police agencies are involved in similar types of crime prevention activities. These include providing information (education) to reduce (re)victimization, doing CPTED audits and inspections to help victims secure their homes and businesses, participating in various watch initiatives such as Neighbourhood Watch and Citizens on Patrol, and offering school-based education and awareness programs such as DARE. However, while some officers pointed out that they were involved with various community groups, few of them reported police involvement in CPSD initiatives. In the interviews and focus group sessions, it was unclear what the role of the police *should be* in social development types of initiatives.

Most police agencies have an individual or a small specialized group of officers that is tasked with crime prevention. These include School Liaison/Resource Officers, Community Liaison Officers, or Community Relations Officers. These are also the police officers working with identifiable groups such as youth, racial or ethnic minorities, seniors, the gay and lesbian community, etc. Most police agencies have specific programs that reflect proactive approaches that have been developed either by members of their specialized groups or self-generated by individual officers. Consistent with the examples above, we were told that some of these programs are initiated by police officers as volunteers.

These programs are based on the needs of specific segments of the community and are often recognized for their effectiveness. The officers involved in these efforts are often credited with doing an outstanding job. Much success is noted which reflects well on the organization and for which the organization takes some credit. All of the participants in this study recognized the value of these types of initiatives and many pointed to the success that one of their special officers had had in developing and implementing a proactive program. However, these proactive programs were not considered to be part of the core function of patrol officers but the domain of specialized officers or units. Ironically, they would be the first cut in response to budgetary restraints.

Much discussion around crime prevention arose when we asked the participants to identify what they did with respect to crime prevention that they considered proactive. This is an important issue in police circles since it signals a modern approach and an understanding of the need to do more than react. After debating whether general patrol counted as proactive crime prevention or not, many of the participants identified their problem solving practices as proactive policing. Indeed for many of the officers taking part in this study, problem-oriented policing or problem solving was equated with being proactive. Moreover, we found widespread support in all six police agencies and at all ranks for problem solving approaches. This should not be surprising for, as Buerger, A. J. Petrosino, and C. Petrosino (1999) point out, police administrators see problem-oriented

policing as a way of maximizing their effectiveness by strengthening the community's ability to handle problems without constantly appealing for police assistance.

The notion of problem solving is a key feature of modern policing especially as it relates to community policing strategies. As Williams (1996) notes, the, "primary goal of problem solving is to identify and resolve the 'root causes' of chronic problems at the neighbourhood level" (p. 312). However, police officers often have different views on what problem solving means. For many of the participants in our study, the problem in problem-oriented policing is usually based on repeated calls for service which is defined as a problem by the police because of the expenditures involved in returning to the same address time after time. Problems from this point of view may not necessarily be the community's problems. Resolutions can involve intensified enforcement, negotiations and mediation, the mobilization of other resources (seniors groups to support other seniors in the community) or so called third-party policing where those implicated are encouraged, persuaded, or bullied to change their operations to avoid future problems (e.g., bar owners or landlords). The objective, for the most part, is to reduce the repeat calls for service. For a small number of respondents, problem solving had broader connotations that more closely resembled the tenets of CPSD and addressed the root causes of crime.

The availability of resources for problem solving activities is crucial. We found that the practical limitations for effective problem solving were based on a lack of resources. A common complaint was that patrol officers typically go from call to call during their entire patrol shift and have little time to do anything beyond taking reports. A sergeant or other supervisor has to allow an officer the time to do a proper problem solving exercise. This usually requires relieving the officer of patrol duties and covering the shortage in patrol staff while the problem solving work is performed. This is often difficult since front line officers, as well as middle managers, are usually dealing with a waiting list of calls for service. Ironically, few of these are emergency calls. Instead, most involve public order issues such as dealing with homeless individuals, those with mental health issues, or those with chronic drug or alcohol problems. Public disorder calls are also common such as neighbour disputes, complaints about barking dogs, and noisy parties. A large portion of the remaining calls involve youth (mischief, vandalism, loitering, petty property crimes), break and enters, and domestic disturbances. These comprise the bulk of the calls answered by patrol officers and represent the routine work that they do. However, the volume of these calls puts pressure on patrol officers to respond in a timely fashion.

Time pressures mean that the scope of problem solving is usually limited and focused on the factors resulting in repeat calls for service. In most cases, there is little opportunity to address the more structural, root causes of crime. This suggests that despite a conceptual understanding of proactive policing as well as general support for problem solving, *police work remains essentially a transactional process rather than a strategic and comprehensive response to problems*. The message we were given over and over again was that the police understand the need and effectiveness of proactive approaches but don't have the resources to do this properly. Current service delivery models restrict the extent of proactive work for even the most supportive officers.

The limited ability of the police to do proactive problem solving tells only part of the story. We found a desire among the participants at all ranks to have front line officers

do more than go from call to call. While those at different ranks may have different reasons, many understand that people enter policing with the idea of contributing to a better society. They want to make a difference and believe that as police officers they can help people. One senior officer told us that current patrol duties quickly turn these officers into report takers. The respondents acknowledged that going from call to call every day leads to dissatisfaction and low morale. Front line officers and their supervisors told us they would like to do more than take reports. Like-minded middle managers can encourage and allow their staff to use their skills and take the initiative to do more, but this has to be managed and others have to take up the slack with respect to answering calls for service.

There was some discussion, however, about conflicting messages with respect to the value and importance of doing proactive work. While most middle managers talk supportively about proactive policing, some continue to pressure front line officers to meet monthly traffic ticket quotas because these lead to good statistics. Indeed, the need for good statistics and the role that statistics play in promotion and reward systems is crucial. The consequence is a very mixed message in which most officers take the default position and ensure that they have the right statistics since these count when rewards are considered. The main message was that the police currently don't have very effective ways of measuring the results of proactive policing which, hence, doesn't show up in their statistics or count in terms of rewards.

Our discussion on proactive policing indicated that there is little understanding or agreement on the role of the police in Crime Prevention through Social Development. Few of the participants had considered what such an approach would mean in terms of the day-to-day activities of front line police officers. When various examples of a more comprehensive, proactive approach were presented, many of the participants found the ideas appealing since they would allow officers an opportunity to do more than merely take reports. The examples of proactive policing suggest that something positive can be done when police officers work with others in the community. The outcomes also suggest that the police can have an important impact on their communities. However, a broader vision incorporating such an approach is lacking at the present time.

What role should front line patrol officers play in working on proactive, comprehensive community-based initiatives? Existing time constraints make an expanded role difficult for patrol officers unless they are deployed in a different way. They do not have the expertise to undertake many of the social level interventions required. However, they do have access to, and detailed information about, communities and their residents. Their expertise is in securing a situation, assessing it, and understanding what is needed. They are limited, however, by the fact that they do not have access to the required community resources. Existing community resources such as child protection, children's aid, welfare, and domestic violence services are often fragmented and overtaxed.

## Conclusions

Our interviews with police officers show that there is a great deal of consensus on what constitutes core policing functions. Law enforcement, responding to emergencies, and maintaining public order top this list. Crime prevention is identified as a core policing function but usually receives lower priority. Soft policing functions such as crime prevention would be the first to go if police budget cuts had to be implemented.

There are contrasting and often contradictory forces at play within the police environment which tend to dissolve quickly when the actual day-to-day operations of the police are examined. Our research showed that while police agencies “talk the talk”, time and resource constraints mean that most front line police officers go from call to call on each shift. There are few resources available for proactive police work. Those individuals or units involved in most proactive work are seen by other police officers as special units that are separate from the front line. Moreover, while doing interesting and important work, what they do is not “real” police work. At the same time, having these specialized units usually means taking officers away from the front line leaving the remaining officers to shoulder a heavier load. This often creates resentment and low morale.

The findings from our study regarding core policing functions indicate that so-called real police work involves law enforcement and maintaining order. This leaves crime prevention in a peculiar position with respect to the role of the police. While it is part of the core function of the police (keeping the peace), and it is touted in police philosophies and management rhetoric, it is consigned to the margins of core policing. As well, it is usually equated with problem-oriented policing that is focused primarily on repeat calls for service as opposed to the root causes of crime. CPSD is a particularly good illustration of this since the police are neither accustomed nor trained to work at the social level. Yet, while many police agencies espouse a proactive approach, in reality they are mainly involved in traditional crime prevention activities such as Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED), and educational programs including school liaison officer programs.

We pressed the respondents on some of the proactive practices they identified as successful. These often involved the police acting in concert with community partners. Some were quite extensive involving a range of community actors including service providers, community groups, and individual residents. If these isolated examples had merit, could their elements be identified and used in the development of a new service delivery model? We tested this idea with the participants suggesting what an integrated model of service delivery might look like based on the examples they had given us. An integrated model would build on the existing strengths and expertise of the police while adding the support and resources of other community agencies.

Police officers are the only 24/7/365 agency in most communities. This means that they are usually the first to respond to problems. Their main role is law enforcement and maintaining public order. However, they should be able to use their knowledge and expertise to act as facilitators in an integrated and comprehensive community response. They have information about the community and are in a unique position to be able to facilitate an appropriate community response. They can help to maximize the

community's response by sharing decision-making power with other service agencies such as health, social services, child protection, and education. They can also offer legitimacy to a comprehensive community response and help to enlist the participation of community representatives (groups and residents). We need to test the validity of such an approach with police leaders for it does imply some fundamental rethinking of the expectations we have of the police within a community policing philosophy.

Police officers see themselves as peace officers whose primary responsibility is to enforce the law and maintain public order. They don't want to be turned into social workers or, in fact, do social work. Police actions are often directed toward individuals causing harm or experiencing problems. Their focus is on individuals since the justice system is designed around ideas of individual culpability and responsibility. While it is relatively easy for them to deliver traditional crime prevention measures, it is more difficult for them to undertake CPSD and other comprehensive social development approaches because they require a different focus and different skill sets while they operate at a different level. They have the community as their focus and activity at the community level as their goal. Social development implies that you are working *at the social level*. Many of the successful efforts of school and community liaison officers do just that in relation to activities that result in social development, such as enhancing the availability of recreational resources in a low-income community. Crime Prevention through Social Development and other proactive responses in the community require actions that address that social level. The police are not trained to work at this level and some would argue that community development should not be their responsibility, that others in the community should take the lead in this area but with the full support and cooperation of the police.

A new integrated and comprehensive service delivery model could be a way of giving police officers an expanded role in community problem solving. Such a model would emphasize their skills and expertise as peace officers and law enforcers. It would build on their operational expertise and experience as first responders. It would provide the police with a way of being involved in proactive community-based problem solving. Creating an integrated and comprehensive service delivery model, however, requires the police to work closely with others in the community. And while the police and their community colleagues have been talking about partnerships for many years, few collaborative partnerships exist in which there is shared responsibility for resources and service delivery. Most partnerships involve cooperation of some sort with some even requiring the coordination of services. Sharing power, however, is not usually part of this equation especially when it comes to the police. If others in the community are to share some responsibility for dealing with community problems, a new type of partnership will have to be developed – one that requires all those involved to share power and control!

The police should be motivated to try such an approach for a variety of reasons. It would allow them to play more satisfying roles as members of integrated teams. We expect that, while working as part of an integrated team, they will be able to see the results of their interventions in the social development of neighbourhoods and communities with a concomitant drop in crime and social disorder. Additional community resources would be available to work closely with the police making police work easier, as well as more rewarding. An integrated service delivery model would also provide the police with a clearly

defined way of being involved in proactive approaches. These would go beyond the narrow problem solving responses currently used by the police. It would also require the police to rethink the way they measure their actions and how they are held accountable. Social level indicators such as quality of life and fear of crime will have to be incorporated alongside traditional outcome measures. This is consistent with new management philosophies that are taking advantage of emerging technologies for measuring outcomes. That being said, the value and impact of an integrated and comprehensive community-based response model will have to be demonstrated empirically.

The police have to see themselves as one player in a broader community effort to deal with crime and improve community safety. As Leighton (2000) notes, the dangers posed by crime must be viewed within the context of changes at all levels of society. As well, all institutions, including the police, must thoroughly and honestly evaluate their roles and functions and take matters in hand. A new police management approach is required, which must focus on strategic and comprehensive problem solving in partnership with other community service providers. Crime Prevention through Social Development can be facilitated through effective police-community partnerships. Police organizations have to recognize the interdependence between the socio-economic, health, social services, education, and criminal justice systems.

Commitment from senior administrators in the police community as well as in partner agencies will be needed. Community resources including those provided by the police are required if a new service delivery model is to succeed. It must be borne in mind that the bulk of these resources already exist in the budgets of various agencies and that an effective integrated service delivery model should actually result in the need for fewer resources in the long run. Since municipalities provide the funds for most of these services, it should be possible to get their cooperation for an integrated response. Provincial cooperation will also be required for those services funded by that level of government.

Based on the examples of successful interventions at the community level we were given, a new service delivery model will have to combine patrol functions with services targeted to specific areas. The identification and prioritization of high “calls for service” neighbourhoods is one way of deciding where to focus the integrated services since they may be too expensive to be deployed throughout the community. Nor is such a response needed in every neighbourhood. One suggestion was that a patrol squad that is responsible for a particular area could rotate individual officers through various functions. These would include some officers responding to calls for service and providing enhanced information while other officers from the squad worked on an integrated neighbourhood team. In this way, individual officers would have an opportunity to be involved in both reactive and proactive policing duties as they rotated through the different roles.

Cooperative training could be scheduled for integrated team members. Police officers working on integrated teams could learn about the mandates and responsibilities of other non-police team members, including the challenges involved in doing these jobs. At the same time, non-police team members could learn about police work including their mandate, responsibilities, and challenges.

Police researchers such as Buerger, A. J. Petrosino, and C. Petrosino (1999) believe that extending the police role is a natural and desirable consequence of community and problem-oriented endeavours. Others, such as Marx (1990), believe that the police should be multi-purpose actors whose goal is to promote the community's welfare. However, we prefer to give consideration to an alternative approach that would consolidate the law enforcement role of the police while encouraging the police to facilitate problem solving through partnerships with other service agencies. These community agencies have a responsibility to address long-term problems and are better equipped than the police to do so. The role of the police and core policing functions should emphasize their law enforcement mandate while taking advantage of their knowledge of the community, their leadership, and their ability to facilitate an integrated and comprehensive community-based response.

## References

Arcand, M. A., & Cullen, J. E. (2004). *Promising practices: Survey of police involvement in crime prevention through social development in Canada*. Ottawa: Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada.

Buerger, M. E., Petrosino, A. J., & Petrosino, C. (1999). Extending the police role: Implications of police mediation as a problem-solving tool. *Police Quarterly*, 2(2), 125-149.

Jamieson, Beals, Lalonde & Associates (2000). *Crime prevention practice in Canada*. Ottawa: Justice Canada.

Jamieson, W., & Hart, L. (2003). *Compendium of promising crime prevention practices*. Ottawa: The Caledon Institute of Social Policy.

Leighton, B. N. (2000). Community policing in Canada: Something old, something new, something borrowed and something blue. In J. V. Roberts (Ed.), *Criminal justice in Canada: A reader* (Chapter 3). Toronto: Harcourt Canada.

Marx, G. T. (1990). Community policing: Rhetoric or reality. *Contemporary Crises*, 14(1), 78-82.

Sherman, L. W., Gottfredson, D., MacKenzie, D., Eck, J., Reuter, P., & Bushway, S. (1997). *Preventing crime: What works, what doesn't, what's promising: A report to the United States Congress*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice.

Vallée, M. (2010). An historical overview of crime prevention initiatives in Canada: A federal perspective. *International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies*, 1(1), 21-51.

Williams, E. (1996). Enforcing social responsibility and the expanding domain of the police: Notes from the Portland experience. *Crime and Delinquency*, 42(2), 309-323.

## CHAPTER 5

# DEVELOPMENTAL PATHWAYS TOWARDS CRIME PREVENTION: EARLY INTERVENTION MODELS

Mike C. Boyes, Joseph P. Hornick, and Nancy Ogden

**Abstract:** In examining the role of early intervention in children's social development, the authors discuss the results of five broad-based intervention programs based on the Healthy Families model originated in the State of Hawaii. These programs were directed toward families at moderate levels of risk when dealing with the arrival their first child and were situated in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Whitehorse, Yukon, and at three sites in Edmonton, Alberta. The authors state that their experiences with this project have led them to question a number of traditional assumptions regarding past theory and research in this area as it pertains to crime prevention. More specifically, they discuss how the developmental model helped to identify the various developmental pathways of positive change that were being demonstrated by families in the Healthy Families Program sites. They agree with other researchers that early childhood intervention is viewed most appropriately as an individualized strategy and not as a developmental panacea.

It is most timely that this impressive group of researchers and policy-makers gathered to chronicle our collective efforts in deciding how best to prevent the development of delinquency and criminality. The history of efforts to intervene early to reduce delinquency and criminality has been long and varied. We have tried many different programs and strategies, and our efforts have been increasingly well documented, as has our understanding of the importance of thorough evaluation as a means for knowing what works, what doesn't work, and why. Now is an ideal time to step back and take in the larger picture of our intervention efforts to date and to plan for future research, policy development, interventions, and evaluations.

Elsewhere in this volume, the traditional theory of social development was called into question. We would like to add our voices to those of others in this special issue and the collected wisdom of the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine in the United States (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000) in this regard. It is clear that the assumption that development is a single linear progression of stages is an oversimplification of many children's realities. We now know that development, particularly in children's early years, progresses as an ongoing interplay of nature and nurture.

We are coming to the end of a three-year longitudinal evaluation of five Healthy Families Program sites across Canada. These Healthy Families sites have been running a broad-based early intervention program primarily directed toward families at moderate levels of risk, coping with the arrival of their first child. Five agencies were involved

in the delivery of the program on three sites: Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island; Whitehorse, Yukon; and Edmonton, Alberta. In Edmonton, the program was delivered by three agencies that considered themselves as one program. However, in terms of evaluation definitions, they were actually viewed as three different programs and were analyzed separately. Our experiences with this project have led us to question a number of traditional assumptions regarding past theory and research in this area.

In our work developing and conducting an evaluation of a sample of Healthy Families early intervention programs, we have benefited from reports of past early intervention efforts. We have also benefited from existing broad models or theories of the contexts and pathways of development from infancy and the early prenatal period, through childhood, and into adolescence and young adulthood. Those interested in crime prevention now have enough information to take a larger scale look at the crime prevention domain from this newly available developmental perspective.

Crime prevention models have included early intervention components for years, but it is only recently that a developmental perspective has been applied to crime prevention models. An advantage of developmental models is that they inform crime prevention models by providing an understanding of the longitudinal causal mechanisms that increase or decrease the risk of a developing child being identified as criminally at risk. Developmental models can inform intervention efforts at all ages and stages and can assist in the development and appropriate targeting of new and existing intervention efforts.

It is no longer enough to simply count risks and protective factors. It is important to understand the multiple contexts (e.g., ecological systems) in which development occurs. This is needed to make sense out of what constitutes risk or resilience factors, or vulnerability or protective factors, within particular age ranges. It is also needed to guide intervention efforts to the places and issues that are of particular developmental importance at a given age or developmental stage. Much of this is done in the course of identifying needs and designing interventions for particular groups (e.g., new parents, preschoolers, etc.). However, unless an explicitly developmental model is adopted, the program runs the risk of missing intervention opportunities as well as experiencing difficulties explaining how their interventions might link up with programs and institutions at the next developmental level, or how they can benefit from information flowing through from previous developmental phases.

We will approach these issues by first describing the trends in the early intervention domain that caused us (and others) to rethink our overall strategy in this area. We will then identify what is meant by the term *developmental prevention* and how it can be used both to inform interventions and to link interventions that are otherwise distinctly focused on different parts of the life cycle. We will discuss how an *ecological model* provides insight into where and how to intervene. An ecological model for developmental prevention highlights the risks and protective factors and provides frameworks for identifying those that are of particular developmental relevance within any targeted developmental period. To illustrate this, we will discuss how the developmental model helped us to identify the various developmental pathways of positive change that were being demonstrated by

families in the Healthy Families Program sites we were evaluating. Finally, by way of connecting our work more directly with the school-age focus of this group, we will discuss the developmental linkages between early (age) intervention programs and early school-aged intervention programs.

## Trends in the Early Intervention Domain

The most significant influence on work in this area has been the renewed focus upon the early years and, in particular, the crucial role that early experience and relationships seem to play in the continued formation and optimal development of the structures of children's brains. The details of this important interaction between infants' basic natures and their environmental circumstances are spelled out in the *Early Years Report* (McCain & Mustard, 1999), and in the previously mentioned report by the American National Research Council and Institute of Medicine entitled, *From Neurons to Neighborhoods* (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). The *Early Years Report* makes a number of key points regarding the importance of the aspects of brain growth and development that occur after children are born and in the context of their relationships with their parents and other caregivers:

How the brain develops hinges on a complex interplay between the genes you are born with and the experiences you have.

Early experiences have a decisive impact on the architecture of the brain, and on the nature and extent of adult capacities.

Early interventions don't just create the context, they directly affect the way the brain is wired.

Brain development is non-linear: there are prime times for acquiring different kinds of knowledge and skills. (McCain & Mustard, 1999, p. 28)

The importance of the early years for development of many of the foundational aspects of the brain and brain functioning is becoming clear. For example, the visual system does not fully develop until after the infant has been exposed to a broad range of complex visual stimuli in the first years of life. The neural networks that form the foundation of later cognitive development are being continuously formed and elaborated throughout the preschool years. As well, the development of the frontal lobe areas of the brain, which are essential for reflection and response inhibition, continue to develop and be open to influence throughout the elementary school years (McCain & Mustard, 1999).

Those writing in this area are very careful to remind us that early development is best viewed as an inextricable interaction of nature and nurture (i.e., of genes, brain cells, and early relationships and experiences). As well, the idea that parents and other caregivers are doing nothing less than *growing their infants' brains* is a very powerful message likely partly selected for its prescriptive force. The only drawback to this forceful message is the public's general tendency to view issues of the brain as genetic and therefore as more biological than social. This runs the risk, *in the minds of the parent consumers of this message*, of actually de-emphasizing the other, equally if not more

important, side of this argument – that what parents must do, or be helped to do, is to build and maintain complex, consistent social connections and ongoing relationships with their infants. This means that our interventions with infants and preschoolers are child-parent system directed (and mainly parent focused early on). It also means we can do much at the level of the neighbourhood and community that will support the effective development of positive nurturing relationships between parents and infants. These points lead directly to a consideration of just what is meant by a developmental approach to intervention and to what sorts of models might best guide us in planning, implementing, and evaluating our efforts in this important area.

## **Developmental Prevention**

Developmental prevention “refers to interventions designed to inhibit the development of criminal potential in individuals” (Farrington, 1996). Aside from assisting programs in deciding where, when, and how to best focus their intervention efforts, a developmental approach to prevention by both programs and policy-makers provides access to a rich source of concepts and studies that could help to identify a new range of questions at all points in the prevention planning and evaluation process (Tremblay & Craig, 1995).

Developmental prevention also includes the idea that development is not a continuous or uniform process. Rather, development proceeds in jumps, steps, and stages and it is important to seriously consider the regular points of developmental transition (e.g., the shift from infancy to the preschool years and the “terrible twos”, school entry, movement to Junior High School, etc.). These transitions provide opportunities for interventions aimed at moving children (either directly or through their family, peers, or community) in the direction of positive developmental pathways. What goes on between the transition points within developmental levels can be mapped out using a version of an ecological developmental model.

## **Ecological Development Models**

The saying that “it takes a village to raise a child” does more than simply suggest that it is a task requiring a lot of work. What it points to is the essential importance of considering both the direct contacts that children have as they develop and the multiple contexts in which those contacts occur if you are to properly see what facilitates or hampers optimal development. Ecological developmental models such as Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) Ecological Systems Theory, Sameroff’s Transactional Model (Sameroff, 1987; Sameroff & Chandler, 1975; Sameroff & Fiese, 1990), Zigler’s Ecological Developmental Approach (Emens, Hall, Ross, & Zigler, 1996; Zigler & Berman, 1983; Zigler, Taussig, & Black, 1992), or Ramey and Ramey’s Biosocial Developmental Contextualism (C. T. Ramey & S. L. Ramey, 1994) are attempts to sketch out this sort of broader perspective on development.

From this perspective, risk, opportunity, and development must be considered in the contexts that consist of the child and his or her immediate family, friends, neighbourhood, spiritual community, and school. Other influential contexts include aspects of social and physical geography such as weather, local and national laws, social

conventions, and cultural and sub-cultural values and ideals. How all of these contextual forces interact with the child's physical makeup determine the actual developmental trajectory or course taken by that individual child. It privileges neither the biological nor the social – neither nature nor nurture. It "...encourages us to look beyond the individual to the environment for questions and explanations about individual behaviour and development" (Garbarino, 1990, p. 78).

## Interventions: Reducing Risks and Bolstering Protective Factors

An ecological perspective suggests that we view a child's actual developmental trajectory or the potential developmental pathways open to him or her as a matter of "fit," that is, as a contextual question of how children exist within or move between the various contexts in which they are found. In this model, risks can be seen both as direct threats to the developing child or as a lack of access to normal, expectable developmental opportunities. Bad prenatal experiences or physical disabilities can represent developmental risks, but so can poor family relationships and the possible attendant loss of support and role models. In bad times or bad developmental circumstances, interventions may not be able to mitigate all risks, but it may be possible for the intervention to assist the at-risk children in finding alternative routes to adaptive development, maturity, and citizenship.

The ecological perspective can also help us to see relationships, influences, or intervention opportunities that we might have otherwise missed with a more singular focus. We may find that a proposed intervention strategy may actually *add to* rather than reduce levels of risk. Workable intervention strategies that are suggested by an ecological perspective may actually seem counterintuitive if viewed in isolation. Finally, an ecological model could point out collaborative opportunities between programs and existing social groups and institutions whose efforts are directed either at the same aged children or at consecutive points along children's developmental pathways.

## The Importance of Early Relationships

The initial love and nurturing children receive from their families, and other early caregivers, are central to their cognitive, emotional, and physical development. If infants live in such environments they learn to trust their caregivers; this makes infants feel secure. Security is vitally important for children's sense of well-being. When infants feel safe they explore the environment, using the caregiver as a secure base (Ainsworth, 1968). This pattern is part of the normal development of infants and very young children and is essential for healthy growth and development. As children get older their social needs change, but security continues to be important to them.

Most children are nurtured by their parents and live in secure, loving, trusting environments and these children are said to be securely-attached. However, not all infants and children feel safe. Large numbers of infants and children experience maltreatment at the hands of those who they depend upon. These children are said to be insecurely-attached. Documented cases of child abuse and neglect indicate that infants without adequate social interaction with other human beings are unable to develop fully human characteristics. In order to develop such characteristics, an infant or young child

requires an ongoing relationship with at least one adult that provides unconditional love and support.

Child maltreatment includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. Research on the community, family, and individual causes of violence in the lives of children and youth emphasize the importance of the family as an agent of socialization. Deprivation from caregivers during infancy predicts anti-social behaviour in children. Deprivation can occur through events such as extended separation from the mother or other primary caregiver, neglect, maternal depression, etc. (Holland, Moretti, Verlaan, & Peterson, 1993). Furthermore, poor parenting practices and dysfunctional family interaction are associated with the development of anti-social and delinquent behaviour (Snyder & Patterson, 1987).

Not everyone from an abusive, dysfunctional, or violent home will experience these outcomes. The relationship between family violence and substance abuse and/or criminal behaviour is not absolute so these consequences are not inevitable. In an attempt to determine just who *is* at risk, researchers assess the presence or absence of two types of variables: risk factors and protective factors (also called resilience).

In infants' and children's lives, risk factors in their family, school, and/or community include variables such as discrimination, family violence and dysfunction, poverty, lack of supervision, violent neighbourhoods, and multiple moves. The presence of any of these risk factors significantly increases children's later risk for negative outcomes such as depression, mental illness, conduct problems, suicide, delinquency and criminality, substance abuse, and aggressive and/or violent behaviour. The greatest risk factor for the development of nearly all forms of behavioural problems is poverty. Child poverty continues to increase in most industrialized nations, including Canada (Canadian Council on Social Development, 1997). The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (1994, as cited in Canadian Council on Social Development, 1997) reports that poverty has a negative impact on family functioning and school performance. Family dysfunction and parental depression are significantly higher in families below the poverty line. Moreover, poor children have lower scholastic and verbal skills on school entry than do their more advantaged counterparts.

The presence of four or more risk factors increases the risk of negative outcomes tenfold (Smith, Lizotte, Thornberry, & Krohn, 1995; Sameroff, 1987). The prevalence of serious delinquency and substance abuse is strongly associated with increased numbers of risk factors. Many risk factors are interrelated. For example, family breakdown is related to high levels of juvenile delinquency. However, family breakdown is also related to high conflict, lowered income, and parental absence, each of which in turn is related to juvenile delinquency (Garbarino, Dubrow, Kostelny, & Pardo, 1992). Thus the factors involved in criminal offending are complex and cumulative, and can be explained both through individual and social history.

An excellent example of the interrelationship between individual and socio-cultural influences is the relatively recent research documenting the destructive consequences of children's exposure to community violence (Sheidow, Gorman-Smith, Tolan, & Henry, 2001; Bell & Jenkins, 1993; Osofsky, Hewers, Hann, & Fick, 1993). There is substantial discrepancy in the degree and extent of exposure to violence among children and

youth living in inner-city communities. Nevertheless, the Canadian Council on Social Development (1997) reports that one in four Canadian children live in an area that is considered unsafe after dark. Characteristics of the neighbourhood (such as the percentages of families working or living below the poverty level, the stability of the neighbourhood, etc.) and family functioning are important influences in how children develop within their local community environments. How important is the family as an agent of socialization in violent communities? Unfortunately, the importance of family functioning is not independent of neighbourhood characteristics. Sheidow et al. (2001) report that, in inner-city communities without positive social processes, the risk of exposure to violence cannot be assuaged by family functioning. That is, for many children exposed to violence within their communities, it does not matter how their family is functioning; these children are at risk simply by living within their community. Children in functional families are at risk; children in dysfunctional families are *more* at risk. These observations underscore the importance of understanding the social ecology of development for identifying how risk factors relate to outcomes (Gorman-Smith, Tolan, & Henry, 1999; National Crime Prevention Council of Canada, 1995) and serve as an important reminder that the family is not the *only* agent of socialization affecting children.

Complete coverage of all pertinent research on violence and criminality is clearly beyond the scope of this chapter. Nonetheless, evidence does indicate a primary role for families and parents. Child abuse and neglect are particularly significant risk factors predicting later involvement in juvenile crime and chronic criminal behaviour. Children exposed to chronic violence are more likely to be violent. The impact of violence on children differs with the type of violence, the pattern of violence, the presence of supportive adult caretakers and other support systems, and the age of the child (Perry, 1995). Children at risk at an early age are in greater jeopardy for multiple negative outcomes later in life. This is due in part to the fact that the younger child has fewer defensive capabilities (Perry, 1995). For example, a random sample of 3,300 Ontario children indicated that between the ages of 4 and 11, family problems such as poor parenting or family dysfunction or violence were the most significant risk factors for developing later psychiatric disorders. However, for children between the ages of 12 and 16, later psychiatric assessments were more closely tied to more conspicuous parental problems such as criminality and mental illness (Grizenko & Fisher, 1992).

## Early Risk and Resilience

Children at risk for later negative outcomes can be identified through particular sets of risk factors. Are researchers equally adept at identifying those factors that will protect children from inferior environments? The answer is, in part, yes. Factors such as high intelligence, secure attachment, average to above average family income, educated parents, etc. can serve as protection for children in destitute environments causing them to be more resilient. In fact, most studies of protective factors (see, for example, Losel & Bliesener, 1990) suggest that under adverse circumstances, 80% of children will “bounce back” from developmental challenges. This assumption is proving to be overly optimistic (Garbarino, 2001; Perry, 1994). For instance, resilience is drastically diminished under conditions of extreme risk accumulation or if children receive inadequate care in the first two years. Garbarino suggests that these observations could be interpreted to mean that

the children and youth best able to survive functionally are those who have the least to lose morally and psychologically. The data yielded from his conversations with youth incarcerated for murder and other acts of violent crime confirm his theory. He reports that the crimes were unaffected by moral compunction or emotional responsibility for others. These young people did not experience shame, guilt, remorse, regret, or contrition for their criminal acts (Garbarino, 2001).

The work of Perry and his colleagues (1994, 1995) has documented the impact of early neglect and abuse on the development of the brain. This research contends that the brains of infants and children are more plastic (i.e., receptive to inputs from the environment) than more mature brains. This means that the infant or child is most vulnerable to disadvantaged environments during the first three or four years. These developmental experiences determine how the brain will be organized and therefore how it will function. Early trauma can produce inadequate development of the brain's cortex (the part of the brain that controls higher abilities such as abstract reasoning and impulse control) by stimulating a stress-related hormone – cortisol – that impedes brain growth.

These findings have implications for research, intervention, and prevention. For example, the earlier an intervention occurs, the more effective and preventive it is likely to be (Blair, Ramey, & Hardin, 1995; Kiser, Heston, & Millsap, 1991; McFarlane, 1987) and thus the more enduring its impact. Furthermore, insightful socio-cultural and public policy implications should arise from understanding the critical role of early experience in socializing infants and children as they mature and acculturate or identify as traumatized and maladapted, thereby affecting our society for ill or good. Perry forcefully argues that we must stop accepting the "myth" that children are resilient, that evidence contradicts such assertions, and children are irrevocably affected by maltreatment. "Persistence of the pervasive [political acceptance of] maltreatment of children in the face of devastating global and national resources will lead inevitably, to socio-cultural devolution" (Perry, 1994).

In Canada, where children and youth comprise 23% of the population, nearly one-quarter of assaults reported to police are visited upon children and youth (Statistics Canada, 2002). While this statistic is disturbing enough, of greater concern however is the belief of officials that many incidents of maltreatment are not documented because they are neither observed nor reported, leading to an underestimate of the extent of the problem. Some types of maltreatment, for instance emotional maltreatment, are difficult to document. Also, factors such as the secrecy surrounding the issue, the dependency of the victim on the abuser, as well as a lack of knowledge about potential sources for help, contribute to under-reporting.

We can conclude that the ramifications of maltreatment of children involve tremendous personal and socio-cultural costs. The financial costs are also staggering. The National Crime Prevention Council, in its report *Preventing Crimes by Investing in Families* (as cited in Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, 1998), conservatively estimates that the annual cost of crime in Canada is in the range of 46 billion dollars. Family violence escalates social and economic costs to the health care system, impacts the civil and criminal justice systems, and creates immeasurable human suffering. The prevention of crime translates into meaningful reductions in human

anguish, community victimization, and money spent on services for young offenders and their families. Society must rethink its priorities with respect to dedicating adequate time, energy, and resources to every aspect of prevention. Programs that support families and parents of very young children can significantly reduce child abuse.

The importance of secure attachments has recently been used to ascertain levels of vulnerability for those at risk of serious criminal behaviour. Many young offenders have been abused or have witnessed abuse in their homes. As already discussed, family violence is a problem that can create lasting physical, psychological, and/or economic repercussions for children and for the larger society. Sexual assault, physical assault, emotional abuse, and neglect can lead to physical and/or mental health problems, problems with relationships, or social functioning. The impacts of child abuse are experienced throughout the individual's lifetime. For example, 50% of those who were abused as children reported also being abused as adults (McCauley et al., 1997).

Research regarding the developmental impact of early maltreatment is particularly sobering when considering juveniles who commit violent crimes. In a study completed in the United Kingdom, one-third of sexual offenders had experienced sexual and/or physical abuse as a child (Dolan, Holloway, Bailey, & Kroll, 1996). The abused offenders, when compared to the non-abused offenders, had experienced more dysfunctional upbringing and demonstrated higher levels of personal disturbance. For example, 58% of fire setters had a history of physical or sexual abuse. The majority of fire setters demonstrated high levels of personal and family disturbance with poor interpersonal relationships with parents/caregivers. Of 20 adolescent perpetrators of homicide, one-quarter had experienced either physical or sexual abuse. Overall, the group convicted for homicide demonstrated high levels of disturbance, high levels of interpersonal conflict with parent/caregivers, and neglect or separation from caregivers. Garbarino (1999) reported that extreme aggression in boys was related to dysfunctional parenting (abusive experiences and/or abandonment by parents) that began in early childhood. This emphasis on the critical importance of early childhood has led researchers to study children and youth who perpetuate violent crimes from a developmental model relating to psychosocial risk and vulnerability (Kazdin & Weisz, 1998; Dolan et al., 1996; Bailey, 1992).

## **Developmental Pathways Within Early Intervention Models**

Specific programs aimed to reduce stress, enhance family functioning, and promote child development were the logical first step in implementing theoretical developmental models. The Healthy Start Program in Hawaii was designed to improve family coping skills as well as family functioning and aimed to promote positive parenting. Its stated purpose was to reduce child abuse and neglect. The program identified high-risk families for abuse and/or neglect by screening newborns and their families in the hospital, and then followed up with community-based home visits from family support services. Families were linked to family physicians or to nursing clinics and connected to a number of community services. Families were followed until the child was 5 years of age. Evaluation of the program revealed that the high-risk families that participated in the program had half the state average for child maltreatment and abuse, whereas the rate of abuse for high-risk families that did not participate in the program was twice the state average.

From its inception in 1992, Healthy Families America Inc. modelled its programs on the groundbreaking Hawaii initiative and implemented nearly 200 programs throughout the United States. However, due to escalating health costs in a country without socialized medicine, the Healthy Families America Inc. program interventions became increasingly focused on helping low income, at-risk families to access state-funded health services. The Health Insurance Association of America estimated that by the year 2007, 53.5 million people in the United States were uninsured with over one-third of these people being children (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, & Smith, 2007). Coupled with the fact that at both the state and federal levels child and family services (i.e., Child Welfare) are less broadly organized in the American system, this indicated that modifications to the Healthy Families initiative would be necessary were it to come to Canada. Canada has a system of socialized medicine that guarantees universal health care and is strongly supported through efficient community public health support. In fact, Canadian children at all income levels make the same average number of visits to doctors, whereas insured American children are eight times more likely to visit a doctor than are uninsured children (Canadian Council on Social Development, 1997). Moreover, Canada boasts more formally organized child and family ministries. These differences enabled Canadian researchers to redefine program objectives and allowed them to focus more intensely and more broadly on the other issues involved in assessing risk.

The Department of Justice Canada, through the National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC), financed a Healthy Families demonstration project through the Crime Prevention Investment Fund. The main goal of the Investment Fund is to establish effective programs for reducing delinquency and crime. Three sites were chosen to pilot the project: "Best Start" in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island; "Healthy Families" in Whitehorse, Yukon; and "Success by Six Healthy Families" in Edmonton, Alberta. Each of these three programs and the people they serve were chosen because they represent very different types of communities. The Prince Edward Island program is in a small urban centre with a large rural population and was later expanded province-wide, the Yukon program serves an Aboriginal community, and the Edmonton program is in a large urban community. In 1999, the Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family (CRILF), located in Alberta, began a three-year project to complete process and outcome evaluations of these Healthy Families pilot programs.

The Healthy Families Program utilizes trained paraprofessional visitors to provide home visitation services to families identified by the public health system as requiring assistance. Healthy Families Programs administer initial and follow-up screenings and establish schedules for home visits. The model requires that the entire child-raising system be assessed. Evaluators from CRILF utilized existing measures and developed measures to assess the risk and protective factors present for each child that could potentially influence a less than optimal developmental trajectory, potentially influencing the child's vulnerability to delinquent and criminal behaviour. Caseworkers help parents access information and make referrals to health and social programs. They help parents develop practical parenting skills, and help them to develop or strengthen existing networks of support. Parents are also encouraged to participate in a career planning program.

The overall mandate of all Healthy Families Programs is to optimize the development of young at-risk children and their families to increase the children's opportunities for later success by early screening, assessment, and intervention. The Canadian focus has been on the transition to parenting, enabling parents to become more effective caregivers in a number of ways. First, the program empowers parents and enables them to access a broad range of community programs and resources (e.g., community kitchens, library reading programs, parenting support groups, etc.). Second, the program has an intense focus on the interaction between the parent and the child, with an eye to identifying issues and facilitating positive parent/child interaction and healthy growth and development for both. Program personnel are trained to identify and address maladaptive parenting attitudes and behaviours.

As already stated, a child's vulnerability to victimization and criminal behaviour involves a number of risk factors including: young single parents; inadequate family income and support; unstable housing; undereducated parents; parental history of substance abuse or psychiatric care; marital problems; and maltreatment (Caledon Institute of Social Policy, 2001). A key issue underlying the Healthy Families project in Canada (and the United States) is whether early experience and intervention make a difference to later occurrence of delinquency or crime. The answer in a recent comprehensive longitudinal review of developmental and early intervention approaches conducted in Australia is unequivocally "yes" (National Crime Prevention, 1999).

## Recent Canadian Evaluations of the Healthy Families Program

For Canada, the results of the initial three-year evaluation of the Healthy Families Program piloted in Prince Edward Island, Alberta, and the Yukon were published in the report entitled *Evaluation of Healthy Families Programs in Selected Sites Across Canada* (Elnitsky et al., 2003). Overall, the findings regarding the effectiveness of the Healthy Families Programs presented in this report lead to the conclusion that the programs were successful at achieving some but not necessarily all of their stated objectives. The detail and quality of the data from Child Welfare services especially provided significant support for the effectiveness of the Edmonton Success by Six and the P.E.I. Best Start programs. Further, the report states:

...our experiences in evaluating these programs left us with the impression that the programs had provided the skills and support necessary for their clients to cope with the crises of everyday life and had, as well, helped the clients achieve goals that we were not able to clearly document. In part this was due to the heterogeneous nature of the clients and their unique needs. However, it may also be due in part to the fact that the complexity of what these programs do is not easily evaluated. Interestingly, as we expanded the evaluation design, we were able to further document outcomes achieved by the programs. (Elnitsky et al., 2003, p. 171)

In the fall of 2002, CRILF, funded by NCPC, began the evaluation of the Prince Edward Island province-wide expanded Best Start program. This evaluation of the expanded program built on the three-year pilot project also funded by NCPC that

began in 1999 and was completed March, 2002. As a condition of the agreement with NCPC, CRILF contributed the services of the data analysts, and the Best Start program contributed the resources of the home visitors for collecting and inputting data for the standardized instruments into a computerized Management Information System (MIS).

In March of 2006, CRILF published a report (Hornick, Bradford, Bertrand, & Boyes, 2006) presenting results from the comprehensive evaluation of the P.E.I. Best Start Healthy Families Program for an additional three years. The report had two major objectives as follows:

1. To present a process analysis, which documents the implementation of the program, including program inputs, activities, and outputs.
2. To present an outcome analysis of the program to determine effectiveness based on the following:
  - short-term outcome data from a set of standardized instruments (child 0 to 3 years old);
  - long-term outcome data from a set of standardized instruments (child 3 to 6 years old);
  - a survey of Best Start clients' experiences and views of the home visitation program;
  - involvement with Child Welfare services; and
  - utilization of health care services.

To accomplish these objectives, both a process analysis and an outcome evaluation based on a program logic model study were conducted. During the previous three-year pilot study of the Best Start program and programs at other sites across Canada, it was very difficult to demonstrate the effectiveness of the early intervention programs for at least four reasons: (a) the nature of the clients themselves; (b) the difficulty in accurately identifying what services were received; (c) the difficulty in identifying and tracking relevant outcomes and benefits; and (d) the effects of history (e.g., changing societal events) on the clients over time.

The previous evaluation (Elnitsky et al., 2003) indicated that client families who received the Healthy Families Programs were a very heterogeneous group. Even though these client families were all assessed as "families at risk", the specific strengths and weaknesses of the individual families were unique and only a few characteristics were commonly shared (i.e., most clients were young, single, poorly educated, and had children with difficult temperaments). This made these families both difficult to serve and difficult to evaluate. Further, because of the unique needs of these families, the specific program goals and activities differed significantly from family to family.

Standardized measures were first administered to clients early in the program (most within the first three months) to provide a detailed picture of the clients' needs. This picture indicated that few clients shared the same pattern of needs. Thus, since all instruments were standardized and "normed" on large samples from the general population, it was possible to determine cut-off scores or predetermined boundaries for

each instrument which distinguished between those clients who “needed to improve” on any specific scale from those who were in the normal range and had no need to improve.

Given that the sample of Best Start clients was relatively large, we were able to dichotomize the sample for each instrument by those clients who needed to improve, to compare them with those who did not need to improve, and to identify what change occurred over time. This approach was employed for analyzing the standardized outcome instruments when possible.

## **Conclusions: Process Analysis**

Despite an initial delay in the implementation of the province-wide Best Start in Prince Edward Island due to an extension of negotiations concerning funding, and the subsequent freeze in funding that necessitated limiting the program to families with children under 18 months old, the program had made considerable progress and was successfully implemented. All components of the original Healthy Families model were being used and there was considerable consistency between the Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island program and the other Best Start sites both in terms of the services offered and the demographic profiles and risk levels of the clients being served. Finally, the projected number of clients to be served had been reached.

Successful implementation was due to a number of circumstances including the following:

- The Best Start Program adopted a well-developed model for home visitation, i.e., Healthy Families, and tailored the program for families at risk in P.E.I.
- The Public Health Nurses in P.E.I. have been highly committed to the Best Start Program and helped to achieve universal screening and consistent assessments of families.
- All of the Children and Family Resource Centres recognized the importance of this primary prevention program and have entered into partnership with Best Start in implementing the program province-wide.
- The Best Start program had attracted support not only from the host agencies but also from both government and community agencies.
- Capacity building in the community occurred on many levels: for example, the Public Health Nurses who do the risk screening and assessments; the Best Start supervisors and workers; and the families who benefit from the support and resources of the Best Start Program.
- The development and implementation of an on-line MIS, as well as the development of the Best Start Core Content, provided the supervisors and Best Start workers with new skills and an understanding of how useful these skills are.

## **Conclusions: Outcomes**

Short-term outcome analysis measured the improvement of the clients located in Charlottetown, in comparison with a low risk non-participant Comparison Group

during their first year of involvement with the program using a number of standardized instruments. The Comparison Group was located in Summerside, P.E.I.

Improvements for the Best Start clients were noted in two of the four areas, specifically, knowledge of child development on the Child Development Inventory (Hornick et al., 2006) and the accurate perception by the parents of the child's temperament according to the Carey Temperament Scale (Hornick et al., 2006). In the other two areas (i.e., family functioning and social support), there was no difference at post-test.

It is important to note we were limited to just two test periods at a 12-month interval since this was the maximum time for follow-up with the non-participant Comparison Group. It is possible, particularly with family functioning, that it takes longer than 12 months to achieve significant positive change. Previous research (Gomes, Hornick, Wagner, Boyes, & Billings, 2005) suggests that family functioning measured by the Family Assessment Device (Hornick et al., 2006) increased the most in the second year of the Edmonton Home Visitation Program. Interestingly, knowledge of child development in the Edmonton study increased the most in the first year.

Long-term outcome analysis measured how Best Start clients who completed the program at 36 months compared to the Summerside Comparison Group. Further, both of these groups were also tested 12 months later to identify whether completed clients declined after leaving the program.

Generally, the findings regarding long-term outcomes were positive although not statistically significant, most likely due to the small number of cases in the two groups analyzed. Parents' adjustment (PSOC) at Time 1 was higher for the Completed Program Group as predicted and over time it increased slightly overall. Social contact (SNI) was also higher for the Completed Program Group at Time 1. Both groups, however, decreased slightly over time. In terms of use of community resources (CCRT), at Time 1 the Completed Program Group reported higher involvement with health, education, and spiritual/cultural resources whereas the Summerside Comparison Group reported higher contact regarding basic needs, child care, family/parent support, and recreation. Over time the Completed Program Group increased the use of resources, especially child care, while the comparison groups tended to decrease contact with the exception of education.

Stress in the family was high for both groups, especially in the areas of financial, career, and home issues. Further, these did not decrease significantly over time. Finally, the behaviour profiles of the children from the two groups were both "normal" although the Summerside Comparison Group had slightly higher scores on the "withdrawn" and "somatic problems" scales at Time 1.

The satisfaction of clients was measured by the parent survey, which was administered to a sample of clients active in the program more than 12 months. Overall, the respondents were very positive about the program indicating that it helped them "very much", particularly in dealing with the baby's difficult temperament. Most clients (approximately 90%) felt that the program helped "somewhat" or "very much" with their ability to deal with stress and problem solving. Further, they highly valued the relationship with the home visitors.

Since the beginning of the first pilot study (Elnitsky et al., 2003), the overall involvement of Best Start clients with Child Welfare increased significantly from 5% at November, 2001 to 20% at December, 2004. This increase is most likely due to the following two factors: (a) the larger number of older children in the current study; and (b) because the program focus had evolved and the program was working much more closely with Child Welfare, it was less likely than before that families would be excluded from the program because of Child Welfare involvement. The increased involvement in comparison with the earlier study was both an expected and positive finding since it indicated that the program workers were working closely with Child Welfare in accurately identifying children in need of protection and monitoring these cases over time even though a formal policy and protocol had not been adopted. Interestingly, the percentage of Best Start clients involved with Child Welfare was comparable to the Edmonton programs, which reported 31% involvement for a similar time period (Gomes et al., 2005).

Further, in terms of overall involvement with Child Welfare, it should be noted that of the initial 190 investigations, only 66 cases were founded – in need of protection, and those resulted in only 14 placements, 3 of which were the result of an apprehension. Domestic violence was the primary reason for investigations and it appeared that the Best Start workers' training regarding domestic violence was helping them to identify risk situations.

In order to facilitate measurement of whether the Best Start Programs were effective at reducing the probability of clients' involvement with Child Welfare, two comparative analyses were conducted. First, a comparative analysis was conducted using a sub-sample of Best Start clients whose children were born during the same time period as the non-participant Comparison Group. The non-participant Comparison Group, however, was a significantly lower risk group at pre-program than the Best Start clients making comparison between the groups difficult to interpret.

The best test of the effectiveness of the Best Start Program in reducing Child Welfare involvement was achieved by comparing the Completed Program Group with the Summerside Comparison Group. These groups had children between four and six years of age and both had high-risk profiles at the pre-program stage, with the Completed Program Group being somewhat higher risk than the Summerside Comparison Group. Overall, the differences between the two groups at December 2004 were very significant. The Summerside Comparison Group involvement with Child Welfare was almost double the Completed Program Group's involvement (58% compared to 31%). Rates of founded – in need of protection were comparable (31% and 33%); however, in terms of action, the Completed Program Group had no actions taken (only one informal placement) compared to six actions for the Summerside Comparison Group.

At the time of the birth of the child, the Best Start Program Group mothers were clearly at higher risk than the General Population. The mothers were younger, had more previous pregnancies, tended to smoke and drink during the pregnancy, over 10% used street drugs, and they gave birth to smaller babies. Despite the fact that these mothers and infants were at higher risk at birth, their utilization of health care, including emergency room visits, hospitalizations, visits to family physicians for health promotion,

and average number of specialist visits were very similar to the General Population – more so than any of the other study comparison groups.

Since there was no direct measure of appropriate utilization of health care research, we assumed the General Population utilization was “average”. That being the case, the non-participant Comparison Group appeared to underutilize services. In contrast, the Completed Program Group and the Summerside Comparison Group appeared to have much higher health care utilization.

The best test of the effectiveness of the Best Start Program in achieving appropriate utilization of health care resources was the comparison between the Completed Program Group and the Summerside Comparison Group – both “high” users as noted above. First, it is interesting to note that the Summerside Comparison Group generally used more health services than the Completed Program Group, with the exception of hospitalization where a referring physician would make the decision about utilization. The biggest difference was the use of emergency room service, which may indicate an inappropriate use of services.

## Overall Conclusions

Overall, the above findings and conclusions are very encouraging. While some of the differences between those who received the program and those who did not were not statistically significant, the pattern of findings over the various measures of outcomes were consistent particularly with respect to Child Welfare and health care utilization. Those who received the program performed better than those who did not.

The magnitude of these findings should be viewed within the context of the calls in prior research that we “should maintain modest realistic expectation for home visiting services” (Gomby, 1999, p. 23). Compared to other evaluations, the Best Start Program has performed well. Further, it should be noted that the findings of this evaluation are quite consistent with the previous research. Gomby (2003), in a review of meta-analyses focusing on the effectiveness of home visitation, concluded:

Effects are most consistent for outcomes related to parenting, including the prevention of child abuse and neglect (depending upon how child maltreatment is measured). Home visiting programs do not generate consistent benefits in child development or in improving the course of mothers' lives. Families in which children have obvious risk factors (e.g., they are biologically at-risk, developmentally delayed, or they already have behavior problems) appear to benefit most. Some studies also suggest that the highest-risk mothers (e.g., low income teen mothers; mothers with poor coping skills, low IQs, and mental health problems) may benefit most, but probably only if the program offers services tailored to address the needs of the mothers. (p. 31)

## Linkages Between Different Programs and Developmental Levels or Transition Points

Transition points are markers where children move from one developmental level to another and/or from one developmental context to another. These transition points are opportunities for families and children to confidently move on independent of the supports provided by interventions in previous developmental levels. There are also opportunities for earlier intervention programs to assist their families and child clients in making these transitions through the provision of information and support. For example, Head Start or kindergarten programs can benefit from information about the vulnerabilities and protective factors that characterize their incoming students. As well, the parents of these children, as a result of their experiences with a home visitation intervention, may be more active and effective in their child's transition to the new school setting.

It is becoming increasingly clear that the best way to view the purposes and efforts of early intervention programs is to adopt a population health model where the general parameters or variables that contribute to outcomes are known and understood (vulnerabilities and resiliencies), but where it is also recognized that there is no single normative pattern in which these factors come together in the developmental stories of individual children and their families. This means that it does not make sense to look for a particular pattern in the interplay of vulnerability and resilience factors along children's developmental pathways. Rather it makes sense to monitor the ways in which families of children at risk address and cope with the array of risks, challenges, and crises they encounter as their children develop. It is in those processes of coping and in the relationships and programs (i.e., connections to home visitors and other early parenting support programs, for example) that support them in these efforts that we will begin to more clearly see how these programs bolster the adaptive processes and outcomes of the children and families with whom they are involved. This also means that family profiles of vulnerabilities may not change over the course of their involvement with a home visitation or other early intervention program. Rather, it may be that their program experiences and the connections or relationships they build with their home visitor act by strengthening their abilities to cope and to adapt more effectively to their roles as parents and as facilitators of their children's development.

In the final analysis, early childhood intervention is viewed most appropriately as an individualized strategy designed to increase the probability of a desired outcome, and not as a developmental panacea for all children under all circumstances. (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000, p. 32)

## References

Ainsworth, M. D. (1968). *Infancy in Uganda: Infant care and the growth of love*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins Press.

Bailey, S. (1992). Personality development in adolescents. *Journal of Forensic Psychiatry*, 4(3), 419-423.

Bell, C. C., & Jenkins, E. J. (1993). Community violence and children on Chicago's southside. *Psychiatry*, 56, 46-54.

Blair, C., Ramey, C. T., & Hardin, J. M. (1995). Early intervention for low birth weight, premature infants: Participation and intellectual development. *American Journal on Mental Retardation*, 99, 542-554.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Caledon Institute of Social Policy. (2001). *Healthy families, healthy communities*. National strategy on community safety and crime prevention, February 1-4, 2001. Ottawa: Author.

Canadian Council on Social Development. (1997). *The progress of Canada's children*. Ottawa: SSCD Publications.

DeNavas-Walt, C., Proctor, B. D., & Smith, J. (2007). *Income, poverty, and health insurance coverage in the United States: 2006* (U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports, P60-233). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Dolan, M., Holloway, J., Bailey, S., & Kroll, L. (1996). The psychosocial characteristics of juvenile sexual offenders referred to an adolescent forensic service in the U.K. *Medicine, Science and the Law*, 364, 343-352.

Elnitsky, S., Hornick, J. P., Bertrand, L. D., Boyes, M. C., Wagner, H., Hanson, P. G., et al. (2003). *Evaluation of Healthy Families Programs in selected sites across Canada*. Ottawa: National Crime Prevention Centre.

Emens, E. F., Hall, N. W., Ross, C., & Zigler, E. F. (1996). Preventing juvenile delinquency: An ecological, developmental approach. In E. F. Zigler, S. L. Kagan, & N. W. Hall (Eds.), *Children, families, and government: Preparing for the twenty-first century* (pp. 308-332). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Farrington, D. P. (1996). *Understanding and preventing youth crime*. York, UK: York Publishing Services for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Garbarino, J. (1990). The human ecology of early risk. In S. J. Meisels & J. P. Shonkoff (Eds.), *Handbook of early childhood intervention* (pp. 78-96). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Garbarino, J. (1999). *Lost boys: Why our sons turn violent and how we can save them*. New York: The Free Press.

Garbarino, J. (2001). An ecological perspective on the effects of violence on children. *Journal of Community Psychology, 29*(3), 361-378.

Garbarino, J., Dubrow, N., Kostelny, K., & Pardo, C. (1992). *Children in danger: Coping with the consequences of community violence*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Gomby, D. (2003). *Building school readiness through home visitation*. Retrieved November 23, 2005 from [www.cfc.ca.gov/schoolready.htm](http://www.cfc.ca.gov/schoolready.htm).

Gomby, D. (1999). Understanding evaluations of home visiting programs. In R. E. Behrman (Ed.), *The future of children* (pp. 27-43). Los Altos, CA: The David and Lucille Packard Foundation.

Gomes, J. T., Hornick, J. P., Wagner, H. A., Boyes, M. C., & Billings, A. L. (2005). *Evaluation of Capital Region home visitation network: Outcome evaluation report* (December 1, 2001 – January 31, 2004). Edmonton, AB: Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI) Evaluation Committee.

Gorman-Smith, D., Tolan, P. H., & Henry, D. B. (1999). The relation of community and family to risk among urban poor adolescents. In P. Cohen, L. Robins, & C. Slomkowski (Eds.), *Where and when: Influence of historical time and place on aspects of psychopathology* (Chapter 15). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Grzenko, N., & Fisher, C. (1992, December). Review of studies of risk and protective factors for psychopathology in children. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry, 37*, 711-721.

Holland, R., Moretti, M. M., Verlaan, V., & Peterson, S. (1993, August). Attachment and conduct disorder: The response program. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry, 38*, 420-430.

Hornick, J. P., Bradford, B., Bertrand, L. D., & Boyes, M. (2006). *Evaluation of Best Start: Final process and outcome analysis report*. Ottawa: National Crime Prevention Centre.

Kazdin, A., & Weisz, J. R. (1998). Identifying and developing empirically supported child and adolescent treatment. *Consulting Clinical Psychology, 66*, 19-36.

Kiser, L., Heston, J., & Millsap, P. (1991). Physical and sexual abuse in childhood: Relationship with post-traumatic stress disorder. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 30*(2), 776-783.

Losel, F., & Bliesener, T. (1990). Resilience in adolescence: A study on the generalizability of protective factors. In K. Hurrelmann & F. Losel (Eds.), *Health hazards in adolescence* (pp. 299-320). New York: Walter de Gruyter.

McCain, M. N. & Mustard, J. F. (1999). *Early years study: Reversing the real brain drain*. The Founders' Network. Toronto: Government of Ontario. Retrieved from: <http://www.eldis.org/go/home&id=17614&type=Document>

McCauley, J., Kern, D., Kolodner, K., Dill, L., Schroeder, A. F., DeChant, H. K., et al. (1997). Clinical characteristics of women with a history of child abuse. *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 277(17), 1362-1368.

McFarlane, A. C. (1987). Post-traumatic phenomena in a longitudinal study of children following a natural disaster. *Journal of American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 26, 764-769.

National Crime Prevention. (1999). *Pathways to prevention: Developmental and early intervention approaches to crime in Australia*. Canberra: Attorney-General's Department.

National Crime Prevention Council of Canada. (1995, November). *Resiliency in young children*. Ottawa: Author.

Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies. (1998). Child protection: Pay now or pay later. *OACAS Journal*, 42(3), 14-15.

Osofsky, J. D., Wewers, S., Hann, D. M., & Fick, A. C. (1993). Chronic community violence: What is happening to our children? *Psychiatry*, 56, 36-45.

Perry, B. D. (1994). Neurobiological sequelae of childhood trauma: Post-traumatic stress disorders in children. In M. Murburg (Ed.), *Catecholamine function in post-traumatic stress disorder: Emerging concepts* (pp. 253-276). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press.

Perry, B. D. (1995). Incubated in terror: Neurodevelopmental factors in the "cycle of violence". In J. D. Osofsky (Ed.), *Children, youth and violence: The search for solutions* (pp. 124-148). New York: The Guilford Press.

Ramey, C. T., & Ramey, S. L. (1994). Which children benefit the most from early intervention? *Pediatrics*, 94, 1064-1066.

Sameroff, A. J. (1987). Environmental context of child development. *Annual Progress in Child Psychiatry & Child Development*, 113-129.

Sameroff, A. J., & Chandler, M. J. (1975). Reproductive risk and the continuum of caretaker casualty. In F. D. Horowitz (Ed.), *Review of child development research* (Vol. 4). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Sameroff, A. J., & Fiese, B. H. (1990). Transactional regulation and early intervention. In S. J. Meisels & J. P. Shonkoff (Eds.), *Handbook of early childhood intervention* (pp. 119-149). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Shonkoff, J. P., & Phillips, D. A. (2000). *From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Sheidow, A. J., Gorman-Smith, D., Tolan, P. H., & Henry, D. B. (2001). Family and community characteristics: Risk factors for violence exposure in inner-city youth. *Journal of Community Psychology, 29*(3), 345-360.

Smith, C., Lizotte, A. J., Thornberry, T. P., & Krohn, M. D. (1995). Resilient youth: Identifying factors that prevent high-risk youth from engaging in delinquency and drug use. In Z. S. Blau & J. Hagan (Eds.), *Current perspectives on aging and the life cycle: Vol. 4. Delinquency and disrepute in the life course* (pp. 217-247). London: JAI Press Inc.

Snyder, J., & Patterson, G. (1987). Family interaction and delinquent behavior. In H. C. Quay (Ed.), *Handbook of juvenile delinquency* (pp. 216-243). New York: Wiley Publishing Inc.

Statistics Canada (2002). Crime statistics. Retrieved April 24, 2010, from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-205-x/85-205-x2003000-eng.pdf>

Tremblay, R. E., & Craig, W. M. (1995). Developmental crime prevention. In M. Tonry & D. P. Farrington (Eds.), *Building a safer society: Strategic approaches to crime prevention* (pp. 151-236). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Zigler, E., & Berman, W. (1983). Discerning the future of early childhood intervention. *American Psychologist, 38*(8), 894-906.

Zigler, E., Taussig, C., & Black, K. (1992). Early childhood intervention: A promising preventative for juvenile delinquency. *American Psychologist, 47*(8), 997-1006.



## CHAPTER 6

# MEANINGFUL INTERVENTION WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH: A REFLECTION ON TEN YEARS OF INQUIRY

Sibylle Artz, Diana Nicholson, Elaine Halsall, and Susan Larke

**Abstract:** It has been known since the early 1970s that youth risk assessment does not necessarily assist us in determining youth needs and services. Still, where young people and crime are concerned, interventions are often focused on risk assessment rather than need assessment, especially when these young people face incarceration. In this chapter we emphasize needs assessment and the development of a youth friendly approach to such assessment. We draw on a number of community-based and community involved studies that were conducted over a ten-year period, studies that focused on the perspectives, experiences, and needs of children and youth, and present as key among these studies a project on the development of a gender-sensitive tool for needs assessment that can aid workers with youth engagement and needs focused intervention.

The analysis presented here is drawn from a number of studies conducted over a ten-year period. These research and development projects focused on the perspectives, experiences, and needs of children and youth. Key among these studies is a project on the development of a gender-sensitive tool for needs assessment<sup>1</sup>, but also included are inquiries that focused explicitly on the experiences of children and youth from Kindergarten to Grade 12 with school and community-based violence<sup>2</sup>, gender differences in perceptions of and experience with aggression and violence<sup>3</sup>, and their experiences of being incarcerated<sup>4</sup>. Included in each of these studies were the perceptions, experiences, and practices of workers and, in some cases, parents (Nicholson, Artz, Armitage, & Fagan, 2000). All these studies involved partnerships with community-based agencies or institutions.

### Current Thinking

Our most recent work on the development of a gender-sensitive guide for needs assessment (Artz, Nicholson, Halsall, & Larke, 2002), which encompassed a literature search of over 1,500 journal articles, books, and studies that spoke to needs assessment in children and youth, suggested that understanding these needs is never a “once and for all” undertaking. Child and Youth Care practitioners and other human service workers must assess and respond to the needs of those they work with on an almost constant basis. We found that the process of needs assessment and of matching need to service is difficult for a number of reasons, including the lack of a consistent and universal definition of what constitutes a *need* (Colton, Drury, & Williams, 1995). Further,

in human services, *needs* are often confused with *risks*. As Anglin (1999) points out, when child welfare legislation shifted to require the assessment of and response to the possibility of *future harm*, the child welfare system responded by introducing procedures to assess and reduce risk. Hence, the term often used to describe children and youth requiring some form of social services is “*at risk*”.

This emphasis on risk was noticeable during conversations with child and family services workers at the commencement of our needs assessment project. We found that most workers turn quickly to thinking about risk and reducing risk and increasing resiliency when they discuss assessing the needs of youth. Our review of the literature on needs assessment also pointed to the prevalence of a focus on risk and resiliency even when document titles implied a *needs* focus (Henderson, Aydlett, & Bailey, 1994; Hodges, 1999; Kroll et al., 1999; Ottenbacher, Taylor, Msall, & Braun, 1996; Towberman, 1992). However, as early as the 1970s, researchers were starting to discuss the fact that assessing for risk does not assist workers in finding the information that they require in order to determine who needs services and what kinds of services might be of the most benefit.

Garmazy (1971) approached risk assessment with caution and introduced the notion of “flipping the coin of risk statistics” (p. 112), based on his observation that most individuals deemed *at risk* do not develop psychopathology. Garmazy made clear that the presence of a risk factor or an adversarial circumstance in the life of an individual is not predictive of what will happen in the future. This observation has been confirmed by Werner and Smith (1992) and others. For example, Masten (1999) found that more than half of the children studied, who were categorized as high risk, grew up to be happy, successful people. This suggests that a focus on risk factors alone will not help researchers or workers to predict or determine outcome (Mangham, McGrath, Reid, & Stewart, 1995), nor will it help to determine need.

Our search of the literature on needs assessment revealed that in the past few years there appears to be a trend toward focusing increasingly on the use of standardized assessment instruments in work with children and youth (cf., Sattler & Hoge, 2006). This trend concerns us because standardized tools generally focus on the individual without consideration of the context in which they live and how contextual factors influence their needs and capabilities.

A welcome departure from standardized assessment is found in Berberet’s (2006) integrated assessment approach to program planning. Berberet (2006) stresses the importance of including youth’s perspectives on their situations and needs and contrasting these with assumptions made by adults engaged in serving the youth. Berberet also points out that many youth workers acknowledge the fact that they don’t understand the needs of the populations they serve. We have heard the same acknowledgement from workers in our research and it was their desire to better understand the populations they serve that provided the impetus for development of our needs assessment guide for youth (Artz, Nicholson, Halsall, & Larke, 2002). Thus, along with Berberet (2006), we take seriously the challenge of determining need and now turn to some promising current responses to children and youth that we wish to highlight.

## Current Responses to Children and Youth and Their Effects

Four key documents are considered here in relation to current responses to children and youth and the effects of such responses:

1. The Policy Framework from the British Columbia Ministry for Children and Families (2000);
2. The Policy Recommendations from Civicus 2001 (Sharpe, 2001a, 2001b);
3. The Circle of Courage (Brendtro, Brokenleg, & Van Bockern, 1990) found also in a Developmental Audit of Delinquency prepared for the W. K. Kellogg Foundation by Augustina College and the Reclaiming Youth Institute (Van Bockern & Brendtro, 1999); and
4. The Emergent Practice Planning Model (Ricks & Charlesworth, 2000), an approach to service that takes into account the “emergent”, that is, always fluid nature of intervention.

### 1. The Youth Policy Framework

The Youth Policy Framework (British Columbia Ministry for Children and Families, 2000) outlines needs of youth that are similar to those articulated in the national youth policy documents presented at the Civicus Conference in 2001 (Sharpe, 2001a, 2001b). The Youth Policy Framework proposes to address youth's needs within the context of key environmental influences that affect the youth's health and well-being. The influences highlighted are the social and economic conditions in which youth live, play, and work, their sense of control, and their family and social connections. The needs attached to these areas of influence are itemized in Table 1 below:

**Table 1: British Columbia Youth Policy Framework**

Key Influences:	Needs:
Social and economic conditions, in which youth live, play, and work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Basic needs met (housing, food, clothing)</li> <li>▪ Safety and security</li> <li>▪ Opportunities for learning, work, and play</li> </ul>
Family and social connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Family and cultural connections</li> <li>▪ Peer relationships</li> <li>▪ Adult relationships</li> <li>▪ Mentors</li> <li>▪ Schools</li> <li>▪ Community</li> </ul>
Sense of control over their lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Value and respect</li> <li>▪ Information, knowledge, and decision-making skills</li> <li>▪ Meaningful participation</li> <li>▪ Opportunities for self-definition</li> <li>▪ Creating positive futures</li> </ul>

## 2. The Policy Recommendations from Civicus 2001

The Policy Recommendations from Civicus 2001 (Sharpe, 2001a, 2001b) provided directions for integrating national youth policies into a long-term strategic global perspective for youth. In the primary document, *The Education of Young People* (Sharpe, 2001a), and the working paper, *National Youth Policies: Towards an Autonomous, Supportive, Responsible and Committed Youth* (Sharpe, 2001b), similar sentiments are expressed regarding the importance of understanding cultural diversity. Sharpe (2001b) states that while “the specific needs of young people will vary from one culture to another, and, indeed from one individual to another depending on circumstances” (p. 8), youth around the world share similar needs for growth and development. Sharpe concludes that young people from all environments share the same basic needs to become autonomous, supportive, responsible, and committed adults. The four outcomes associated with these needs are given in Table 2 below:

**Table 2: Four Essential Needs in Youth (Sharpe, 2001a, 2001b).**

Needs	Outcomes
Autonomous	Able to make choices and control their personal and social life as an individual and as a member of society.
Supportive	Able to show concern for others, to act with them and for them, to share concerns.
Responsible	Able to take responsibility for their actions, keep commitments, and complete whatever they undertake.
Committed	Able to assert themselves in respect to values, a cause, or an ideal to act accordingly.

## 3. The Circle of Courage

In 1990, Brendtro, Brokenleg, and Van Bockern established the Circle Of Courage, a model for understanding the core needs of all young people based on a combination of Native American child-rearing practices, psychology, and the research and practices of North American youth-work pioneers. This model is based on the interconnection of four areas or quadrants of influence and experience that are central to all children’s lives, where each quadrant represents “the four overriding needs of young people: Belonging, Mastery, Independence, and Generosity” (p. 173). Brendtro and his colleagues contend that if any of these needs remain unmet, “the child is at risk and is in danger of being hurt, [and a] hurting child hurts others” (p. 173). Thus, need exists before risk surfaces and, therefore, should not be considered solely as a function of risk.

Van Bockern (1998) subsequently examined the needs of youth against the Circle of Courage by following the paths of two males from youthful delinquency to adult criminality. He found that these young people suffered from a lack of parental

support, negative school experiences, and had moved from committing minor offences (shoplifting) to incarceration for murder and assault. Van Bockern notes that “the bonds that transmit basic human needs from adults to the young began unraveling for Howard and Bobby during their earliest years” and suggests that as a result these children were seeking to fill their needs for belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity with “gangs and connections to false friends and relationships with adults who will exploit youth” (p. 173). According to Van Bockern, youth will seek mastery through “snatching purses, stealing chickens, or displaying sexual prowess on the video screen” (p. 173). Independence will be represented as “a sense of control sought in drugs and alcohol; generosity is measured by the amount of drugs and alcohol shared with others” (p. 173). While the means to meet these needs by youth may be misguided, Van Bockern asserts that youth are pursuing “worthy ends... they haven’t given up; they are struggling to fix discouraging life situations” (p. 174).

Van Bockern (1998) thus suggests that, rather than focusing upon the deviance and pathology of troubled children, youth would be better served if their behaviours were seen as attempts to cope with very abnormal life situations and circumstances. Such an approach would not involve adults “reciprocating with counter-aggression” when the youth responds with rage and rebellion (p. 173). Instead, workers would use responses that “disengage and de-escalate conflict” and involve “listening and responding with empathy, while also clarifying for children their needs and feelings and helping them take responsible actions through coping skills” (p. 174).

Van Bockern’s (1998) notions are echoed by literature that focuses on the importance of workers’ avoidance of becoming caught up in children and youth’s challenging behaviours and suggests that they should instead consider these behaviours as indicative of underlying need (Richardson, 2001). Maier (1991) stresses the importance of seeing youth’s challenging behaviours as *unusual* rather than as *deviant* and of viewing challenging behaviours in terms of how they fit into a child or youth’s developmental progression. Thus, care workers need an understanding of child development, which allows them to understand a youth’s pattern of coping with specific life situations and therefore helps them to determine what the young person’s next developmental task should be. According to Maier, such a developmental focus holds more promise than working towards undoing or correcting unwanted behaviours.

#### 4. Emergent Practice Planning

Ricks and Charlesworth (2000), in their manual on Emergent Practice Planning, note that practitioners’ approaches to need are premised on their preferences for various behaviour change theories and framed by their favourite interventions rather than by their clients’ perspectives and assessment of the situation. Ricks and Charlesworth suggest that, rather than framing a client’s needs through their own eyes, practitioners should frame their interventions *with* the client, to see to it that these interventions are related to the client’s need(s) and are possible and realistic given the client’s present level of functioning and capacity. According to Ricks and Charlesworth, assessment should focus on working with clients to establish needs and goals so that the formulation of service action plans can promote change in ways that are meaningful to clients.

## Promising Practices and Approaches for Effectively Meeting the Needs of Children, Youth, and the Community

### Positive Relationship Development

Consultation with youth and workers from three Vancouver Island communities (Artz, Nicholson, Halsall, & Larke, 2002) underlined the point that positive relationships are essential to needs assessment and to meaningful intervention. The importance of relationship was also noted by Clarke (2001) who, in his research on 40 years of psychotherapy outcome studies, found that after individual client factors, such as capability, capacity, and potential which account for 40% of behaviour change, positive worker-youth relationship accounts for 30% of behaviour change. Along with client factors and relationship, the worker's ability to instill a sense of self-efficacy and possibility, that is, hope and positive expectations in the youth, account for 15% of behaviour change. Finally, intervention techniques, programs, or models account for the remaining 15%. Thus, taken together, client capability, the relationship between client and worker, and hope and expectancy account for 85% of behaviour change, while technique accounts for only 15%.

The importance of relationships was also noted in research on school-based violence prevention. Students involved in violence prevention appeared to respond more favourably to violence prevention programming if they were systematically positively reinforced by adults for pro-social behaviour, if their teachers and parents were involved with them in a variety of activities, not just violence prevention programs, and if their parents and teachers used respectful communication and conflict resolution skills with them. Also important to these students were opportunities to participate in teaching others bully prevention techniques and, especially for girls, to be involved in group-based social skills training (Artz, Riecken, MacIntyre, Lam, & Maczewski, 2000).

Positive relationships were also emphasized by youth in custody and girls interviewed in the context of research on their use of violence. These young people expressed great faith in counsellors and teachers who listened to them, took the time and trouble to give them information relevant to their problems, and spent time talking and joking with them. Workers and teachers who used put-downs, coercion, and intimidation were described by these young people as contributing to their negative behaviour, as were those who labelled them by using pejorative terms such as “uncontrollable” or “deviant” (Artz, 1998; Artz, Blais, & Nicholson, 2000a).

Youth told us repeatedly that they do not cooperate with workers with whom they have no established connections or with assessments that they believe are disrespectful and intrusive – that is, assessments that ask them to answer what youth described as “irrelevant and demeaning” questions about their personal lives, relationships, and activities. Clarke (2001) also recognized this dynamic and stressed a very important point often overlooked by adults: It is the youth's assessment of her or his relationship with the worker that matters. If a young person doesn't feel positive about and involved in the relationship with the worker, the relationship doesn't really exist, regardless of how it may be defined by the worker.

Clarke (2001) also comments on the reason why diagnoses of problems based on impersonal assessments don't work: Children and youth are active and generative; the severity, magnitude, and frequency of problems are constantly changing, and change itself is a powerful client factor. Thus, as he points out, we do young people a profound disservice if we take an approach that represents their problems as static and constant, that is, captured in diagnostic labels, because this implies that their presenting complaints have a quality of permanence that is contradictory to the notion of change. Clarke states that worker "expertise continues to be vital and required; but only to guide and raise the three critical ingredients – the tactical triad – of a youth's resources, perceptions and participation" (p. 26). These critical ingredients should, therefore, be a part of any assessment. Workers should not focus on "what is wrong and what a child or youth cannot do," but instead on what young people can already do, on their resources, on what they think and feel, and on what they are willing to try.

### **The Importance of Gender and Culture**

Gender and culture have long been neglected aspects of research and practice and this neglect perpetuates systemic discrimination (Hannah-Moffat & Maurutto, 2003). Our research and that of numerous others showed that gender and culture are important considerations that must be included in any intervention because our individual experiences in each of these areas shapes how we see others and ourselves (Artz, 1998; Artz, 1999; Artz, Riecken, et al., 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000; Artz, Nicholson, & Blais, 2000a, 2000b; cf., Canada, 1998; Garbarino, 1999; Gilligan, 1982; Kemp, Whittaker, & Tracy, 1997; Leadbeater, Blatt, & Quinlan, 1995; Lezak, 1995; Miller, 1976; Pipher, 1994; Plummer, 1999; Pollack, 1998; Riecken, 2000; Tanenbaum, 1999; Taylor, Gilligan, & Sullivan, 1995). So, too, must sexual orientation (Daley, 1998; DuBeau, 1998).

Artz, Riecken, et al. (1997, 1998, 1999, 2000) found that gender plays a major role in students' perceptions of and experiences with violence, as well as in how students respond to violence prevention. Gender also plays a role, both in how students and their parents participate in violence prevention, and in how teachers involve themselves in violence prevention, particularly pertaining to intervention. This series of studies conducted by Artz and her colleagues showed that females (students, teachers, and parents) were more concerned about violence and participated more in violence prevention efforts; that female students were more receptive to violence prevention programming and changed their attitudes and behaviours toward non-violence to a significantly greater degree than their male counterparts; that male students were more often both victims and perpetrators of violence but less willing to desist from endorsing and using violence; and that male teachers were less intimidated with regard to acting to end a violent altercation between students. Riecken (2000) suggests that these gender differences have their origins in a cultural milieu that exposes males to more violence than is the case for females, while also expecting – even demanding – from boys and men a greater readiness to accept and deal with violence.

The importance of considering gender and culture was further examined in Artz, Blais, and Nicholson (2000a, 2000b) where it was found that gender and culture play a significant role in how custody workers and probation officers relate to their clients and to each other, and in how youth in custody and on probation relate to each other and to workers. We also previously found that gender and culture play a central role in how assessment is conducted and how and what resources are made available (Artz, Nicholson, Halsall, & Larke, 2002).

We believe that, within any given society, there are different expectations and demands for behaviour, beliefs, and adaptations across different situations and subcultures. These differences result in wide cultural and gender-based variation in concepts of self, styles of communication, coping mechanisms, and what is considered adaptive or appropriate (Neisser et al., 1996). The need for culture- and gender-based influences to be carefully considered and explored as part of any intervention or service action is, therefore, paramount because unexamined culture- or gender-based assumptions may result in confusion, misinterpretation, and misattribution of labels and causes (Lezak, 1995). Before conclusions are drawn about clients' lives, any culture- or gender-based explanations of issues or problems should be explored, examined, and understood (Sattler, 1992).

Each youth has needs that are unique to that individual. A relationship-focused process of assessment enables youth workers to draw out the necessary information to build a continually evolving understanding of where each youth is individually, developmentally, and culturally. We acknowledge that some youth may have pressing needs associated with mental health or developmental challenges. Our approach to assessment can be described as inclusionary and differential. By including youth in discussions about their own situations and needs, workers can build an understanding of the influences of culture, gender, and development.

Our approach to assessment also allows the differential needs of boys and girls from diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences to be considered in matching the needs of youth to effective interventions (Reitsma-Street, Artz, & Nicholson, 2005). For example, responsive practice based on the differential and inclusionary assessment approach we promote can involve taking diverse learning styles, cognitive abilities, and emotional maturity of youth into account when planning appropriate interventions (Reitsma-Street, 2004). Nuanced differences in a youth's ability to tolerate ambiguity, uncertainty, and authority can all be taken into account when needs assessment permits insights into the differential effects of gender, culture, and development. In this way, our approach can be readily adapted to work with youth that experience mental health and developmental challenges.

In our view, recognition of the complex interplay between individuals and their social and physical worlds in the creation of need is the most appropriate starting point for assessing and responding to needs. Young people's needs are dependent upon context and resource. Meeting these needs invariably involve working with contexts and even changing contexts rather than merely changing individual behaviours. We therefore suggest an approach to needs assessment that is ecological and inclusionary and

highlights an individual's strengths and ability to negotiate contexts rather than focusing only on personal risks and deficits.

## Ways of Establishing or Enhancing Partnerships

### Caring and Collaboration

With children and youth, partnerships are initially established and enhanced through a clear and unambiguous message of caring. Youth research participants stated repeatedly that only those workers who they believed genuinely cared about them received their trust, and along with their trust, their cooperation (Artz, Blais, & Nicholson, 2000a; Artz, Nicholson, Halsall, & Larke, 2002).

Among agency workers, whether that is within or across agencies, the following detractors and facilitators were found to be influential on workers' ability and willingness to work collaboratively (Nicholson et al., 2000, p. 56).

**Table 3: Organizational Detractors and Facilitators of Collaborative Practice (Nicholson, Artz, Armitage, & Fagan, 2000)**

	<b>Detractors</b>	<b>Facilitators</b>
<b>Organizational Factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ high caseloads</li> <li>▪ low resources</li> <li>▪ climate of uncertainty around reorganization</li> <li>▪ lack of administrative support to coordinate/plan meetings and schedules</li> <li>▪ hiring staff without experience with collaborative approaches</li> <li>▪ lack of a formal communication structure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ having a team structure</li> <li>▪ protecting team meeting times (individuals are expected to attend)</li> <li>▪ maintaining a philosophy that mandates family/client involvement in collaboration</li> <li>▪ allowing choices re: collaboration process</li> <li>▪ providing a non-competitive environment</li> </ul>

**Table 4: Individual Detractors and Facilitators of Collaborative Practice**  
**(Nicholson, Artz, Armitage, & Fagan, 2000)**

	<b>Detractors</b>	<b>Facilitators</b>
<b>Individual Factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ not sharing work</li> <li>▪ not being able to express limits around work and own abilities</li> <li>▪ needing to control others</li> <li>▪ needing to work autonomously</li> <li>▪ needing to have own opinion accepted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ flexibility</li> <li>▪ self-awareness</li> <li>▪ commitment to collaboration</li> <li>▪ valuing others</li> <li>▪ accepting of individual differences</li> <li>▪ good communication</li> <li>▪ developing and valuing personal relationships with co-workers</li> <li>▪ understanding others, their roles, and contributions</li> <li>▪ educating others about self, own role, and contributions</li> </ul>

The promising practices outlined above and the detractors and facilitators noted by Nicholson et al. (2000) were also identified by teachers, parents, and family counsellors of children under the age of 12 years with severe behaviour problems, who participated in a study with the objective of improving services to these children (Artz, 1999).

Teachers working in behaviour support noted that they highly valued the ability to work as members of a team from a solution focused, rather than a problem focused perspective. Also identified by these teachers as central to collaborative work and enhanced partnership across disciplines and professions were the following elements: having rapport with key people in agencies and developing credibility over time; close and open communication with parents; the presence of resource personnel and people who offer a variety of strategies or suggestions; and locating agencies directly in schools (Artz, 1999).

Parents of children in need of behaviour support reported feeling very appreciative of administrators, teachers, and youth and family counsellors who were able to listen to parents, to let them vent if necessary, and to take their concerns seriously. These parents also appreciated the team approach taken by those who worked with their children and believed that such teamwork enhanced their children's overall chances for positive growth and change (Artz, 1999).

### **Barriers to Caring and Collaboration**

Parents and workers noted these issues as barriers to effective work: an inability to listen; negative attitudes and a lack of negotiating skills in anyone involved; difficulties in communication with child welfare ministry workers and constant ministry flux; and haphazard inter-system communication. All parents who had been or were clients of

the child welfare ministry mentioned difficulties with having to deal with constantly changing ministry workers. They noted that each time a worker changed, they must start the job of building a relationship again and must repeatedly recount their histories and must once more fight the same battles for needed resources.

Workers and parents felt that services would be more effective if: knowledge and expertise were better shared; all those who might be involved in service provision and the public were better educated regarding the developmental needs of children and especially children and youth with special needs; a cross-ministerial mechanism were in place for tracking clients and information sharing; and insuring the inclusion in decision-making of all interested and involved parties. Finally, parents suggested that, since boys in need of behaviour support far outnumbered girls, greater sensitivity to the gendered underpinnings of behaviour would assist all concerned with devising more effective intervention (Artz, 1999).

### ***Working With, not For or on Behalf of***

The success of all the work described here — violence prevention in schools that contributed to a 40% to 50% reduction in school-based violence (Artz, Riecken, Van Domselaar, & Laliberté, 1994; Artz, 1998; Artz, Riecken, MacIntyre, Lam, & Maczewski, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000); the creation of a set of collaboratively developed recommendations for a community-based approach to dealing with violent under 12-year-olds (Artz, 1999); the development of gender-sensitive professional development workshops by custody centre staff for custody centre staff (Artz, Blais, & Nicholson, 2000b); and the design of a youth and worker friendly tool for needs assessment (Artz, Nicholson, Halsall, & Larke, 2002) — was dependent upon an approach to research and development premised on equality of partnership, cooperation, and commitment to working *with* rather than for or on behalf of community agencies and institutions and those who were research participants.

The research and development projects described here were participatory in nature and are still being carried out, at least in part, by the participants, despite the projects having ended and funding having been cut. In the school district that participated in the studies on violence prevention and on developing a community-based approach to working with violent under 12-year-olds, teachers and agency workers remain committed to research and evaluation along with violence prevention and are continuing to develop and evaluate a variety of programs. In the custody centre, despite major adjustments in funding, changes in personnel, and moving from one building to another, staff remain involved in the design and delivery of staff development training. In the three communities that participated in the development of the gender-sensitive needs assessment tool, participants and their supervisors are disseminating the tool, and a ministry-based workshop is planned to assist workers in using the tool. It remains for others to conduct follow-up research on the legacy of these collaborative projects. Doing so will allow the replication not only of the successful programming that these partnerships developed, but also the replication of the processes that supported these successful partnerships.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> (Artz, Nicholson, Halsall, & Larke, 2002). This study was funded by the National Crime Prevention Centre, Department of Justice Canada.

<sup>2</sup> (Artz, Riecken, Van Domselaar, & Laliberté, 1994; Artz, 1998; Artz, Riecken, MacIntyre, Lam, & Maczewski, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000). These studies were funded by the British Columbia Health Research Foundation, the Vancouver Foundation, and The British Columbia Ministry of Education Research Branch.

<sup>3</sup> (Artz, Riecken, et al., 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000; Artz, 1998; Artz, Blais, & Nicholson, 2000a, 2000b). These studies were also funded by the National Crime Prevention Centre, Department of Justice Canada.

<sup>4</sup> (Artz, Blais, & Nicholson, 2000a).

## References

Anglin, J. (1999). *Meaning and implications of the move to paramountcy of the safety and well-being of the child in child welfare legislation*. Ottawa: Department of Justice, Canada.

Artz, S. (1998). *Sex, power, and the violent school girl*. Toronto: Trifolium.

Artz, S. (1999). *A community based approach for dealing with chronically violent under twelve year old children*. Ottawa: Department of Justice, Canada.

Artz, S., Blais, M., & Nicholson, D. (2000a). *Developing girls' custody units*. Unpublished Report, Justice Canada.

Artz, S., Blais, M., & Nicholson, D. (2000b). *Victoria Youth Custody Centre gender-sensitive staff training curriculum*. Unpublished Report, Justice Canada.

Artz, S., Nicholson, D., Larke, S., & Halsall, E. (2002). *Developing a gender-sensitive needs assessment tool for youth*. Ottawa: National Crime Prevention Centre.

Artz, S., Riecken, T., Van Domselaar, T., & Laliberté, P. (1994). *A study of violence among adolescent female students in a suburban school district: Phase I: A survey of student life*. Unpublished Report, British Columbia Ministry of Education, Victoria, BC.

Artz, S., Riecken, T., MacIntyre, B., Lam, E., & Maczewski, M. (1997). *A community-based violence prevention project, University of Victoria and School District 62 at Sooke, BC*. (Health Research Foundation fourth quarter report, December, 1996-June 30, 1997). Vancouver, BC: British Columbia Health Research Foundation.

Artz, S., Riecken, T., MacIntyre, B., Lam, E., & Maczewski, M. (1998). *A community-based violence prevention project, University of Victoria and School District 62 at Sooke, BC*. (Health Research Foundation fifth quarter report, August 16, 1997-January 21, 1998). Vancouver, BC: British Columbia Health Research Foundation.

Artz, S., Riecken, T., MacIntyre, B., Lam, E., & Maczewski, M. (1999). *A community-based violence prevention project*. (BC Health Research Foundation, final report, September 1999). Vancouver, BC: British Columbia Health Research Foundation.

Artz, S., Riecken, T., MacIntyre, B., Lam, E., & Maczewski, M. (2000). Theorizing gender differences in receptivity to violence prevention programs in schools. *The B.C. Counsellor*, 22(1), 7-35.

Berberet, H. (2006). Putting the pieces together for queer youth: A model of integrated assessment of need and program planning. *Child Welfare*, LXXXV(2), 361-384.

Brendtro, L., Brokenleg, M., & Van Bockern, S. (1990). *Reclaiming youth at risk: Our hope for the future*. Bloomington, IN: National Education Service.

British Columbia Ministry for Children and Families (2000). *The youth policy framework*. Victoria, BC: Author.

Canada, G. (1998). *Reaching up for manhood: Transforming the lives of boys in America*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Clarke, M. (2001). Influencing positive behavior change: Increasing the therapeutic approach of juvenile courts. *Federal Probation*, 65(1), 18-28.

Colton, M., Drury, C., & Williams, M. (1995). Children in need: Definition, identification and support. *British Journal of Social Work*, 25(6), 711-728.

Daley, A. (1998). Lesbian invisibility in health care services: Heterosexual hegemony and strategies for change. *Canadian Social Work Review*, 15(1), 57-71.

DuBeau, T. (1998). Making a difference in the lives of gay and lesbian students. *Reclaiming Children and Youth*, 7(3), 164-168.

Garbarino, J. (1999). *Lost boys: Why our sons turn violent and how we can save them*. New York: Free Press.

Garmazy, N. (1971). Vulnerability research and the issue of primary prevention. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 41, 101-116.

Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different voice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Hannah-Moffat, K., & Maurutto, P. (2003). *Youth risk/need assessment: An overview of issues and practices*. Ottawa: Department of Justice, Canada. On-line: [www.justice.gc.ca](http://www.justice.gc.ca).

Henderson, L., Aydlett, L., & Bailey, D. (1994). Evaluating family needs surveys: Do standard measures of reliability and validity tell us what we want to know? *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*, 11(3), 208-219.

Hodges, K. (1999). Child and adolescent functional assessment scale (CAFAS). In. M. Maruish (Ed.), *The use of psychological testing for treatment planning and outcomes assessment* (2nd ed., pp. 321-664). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Kemp, S. P., Whittaker, J. K., & Tracy, E. M. (1997). *Person-environment practice: The social ecology of interpersonal helping*. New York: Aldine De Gruyter.

Kroll, L., Woodham, A., Rothwell, J., Bailey, S., Tobias, C., Harrington, R., et al. (1999). Reliability of the Salford needs assessment schedule for adolescents. *Psychological Medicine*, 29(4), 891-902.

Leadbeater, B. J., Blatt, S. J., & Quinlan, D. M. (1995). Gender-linked vulnerabilities to depressive symptoms, stress, and problem behaviours in adolescents. *Journal of Adolescence*, 5(1), 1-29.

Lezak, M. (1995). *Neuropsychological assessment*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Maier, H. (1991). Developmental foundations of child and youth care work. In J. Beker & Z. Eisikovits (Eds.), *Knowledge utilization in residential child and youth care practice* (pp. 25-48). Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America.

Mangham, C., McGrath, P., Reid, G., & Stewart, M. (1995). Resiliency: Relevance to health promotion discussion paper. Retrieved May 14, 2003 from <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/alcohol-otherdrugs/pubs/resilney/discus.htm>.

Masten, A. (1999). Commentary: The promise and perils of resilience research as a guide to preventive interventions. In M. Glantz & J. Johnson (Eds.), *Resilience and development: Positive life adaptations: Longitudinal research in the social and behavioral sciences* (pp. 109-128). New York: Kluwer /Plenum Academic Press.

Miller, J. B. (1976). *Toward a new psychology of women*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Neisser, U., Boodoo, G., Bouchard, T. J., Boykin, A. W., Brody, N., Ceci, S. J., et al. (1996). Intelligence: Knowns and unknowns. *American Psychologist*, 51(2), 77-101.

Nicholson, D., Artz, S., Armitage, A., & Fagan, J. (2000). Working relationships and outcomes in multidisciplinary collaborative practice settings. *Child and Youth Care Forum*, 29(1), 39-73.

Ottenbacher, K., Taylor, E., Msall, M., & Braun, S. (1996). The stability and equivalence reliability of the functional independence measure for children (WeeFIM). *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology*, 38(10), 907-916.

Pipher, M. (1994). *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the selves of adolescent girls*. New York: Grosset/Putnam.

Plummer, D. (1999). *One of the boys: Masculinity, homophobia, and modern manhood*. New York: Harrington Park Press.

Pollack, W. (1998). *Real boys: Rescuing our sons from the myths of boyhood*. New York: Henry Holt.

Reitsma-Street, M. (2004). Radical pragmatism: Prevention and intervention with girls in conflict with the law. In M. Hoskins & S. Artz (Eds.), *Working relationally with girls* (pp. 119-137). Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Press.

Reitsma-Street, M., Artz, S., & Nicholson, D. (2005). Canadian girls and crime in the twenty-first century. In J. Winterdyk (Ed.), *Issues and perspectives on young offenders in Canada* (3rd ed., pp. 57-82). Toronto: Nelson.

Richardson, B., (2001). *Working with challenging youth: Lessons learned along the way*. Philadelphia: Brunner-Routledge.

Ricks, F., & Charlesworth, J. (2003). *Emergent practice planning*. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

Riecken, T. (2000). "What's your problem man?" (And how can I help?): Redesigning the landscape of boyhood. *The B.C. Counsellor*, 22(1), 37-43.

Sattler, J. M. (1992). *Assessment of children: Revised and updated*. (3rd ed.). New York: Jerome Sattler, Publisher Inc.

Sattler, J. M., & Hoge, D. (2006). *Assessment of children: Behavioral, social and clinical foundations* (5th ed.). San Diego, CA: Jerome Sattler, Publisher, Inc.

Sharpe, J. (2001a). Presentation of the education of young people at the August, 2001 Civicus World Assembly Conference, Vancouver, BC.

Sharpe, J. (2001b). Presentation of national youth policies: A working document from the point of view of "non-formal education" youth organizations at the August, 2001 Civicus World Assembly Conference, Vancouver, BC.

Tanenbaum, L. (1999). *Slut! Growing up female with a bad reputation*. New York: Seven Stories Press.

Taylor, J. M., Gilligan, C., & Sullivan, A. M. (1995). *Between voice and silence*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Towberman, D. (1992). National survey of juvenile needs assessment. *Crime and Delinquency*, 38(2), 230-238.

Van Bockern, S., & Brendtro, L. K. (1999). *The developmental audit of delinquency*. Proposal submitted to the W. K. Kellogg Foundation by Augustina College and the Reclaiming Youth Institute.

Van Bockern, S. (1998). Meeting the needs of our youth. *Reclaiming Children and Youth*, 7, 172-175.

Werner, E. E., and Smith, R. S. (1992). *Overcoming the odds: High risk children from birth to adulthood*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.



## CHAPTER 7

# VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND THE CANADIAN GIRL CHILD

Yasmin Jiwani, Helene Berman, and Catherine Ann Cameron

**Abstract:** The authors argue that because there are no groups of girls or young women that can be considered immune from gender-based or systemic violence, there is a significant need for the inclusion and recognition of the girl child in official policies, programs, and legislation. In their view, a fundamental recognition of the specificities of the gendered nature of violence, particularly as it intersects with age, race, class, ability, and sexual orientation is required. Moreover, the antecedent roots of violence need to be identified, as they provide sites for effective and early intervention. They discuss the social and historical context of the girl child in Canada and follow this analysis with a presentation of the research carried out by the Alliance of Five Research Centres on Violence and its consequent implications for policy and programming. Finally, the authors append a detailed list of concrete recommendations for policy-makers at all levels of government, as well as for service providers and the media, covering such areas as education, service delivery, and future research.

The occurrence of violence is a significant threat to the health, safety, and well-being of all girls and young women. This assertion holds true regardless of whether girls grow up in loving homes where mutual respect is valued, and where conflict is resolved by peaceful means, or whether they live in homes where interactions are characterized by violence and aggression. The capacity of families to keep their daughters safe and to shield them from violence is limited by the multitude of ways in which violence is condoned and perpetuated in our communities, the media, schools, and society in general. Although violence is experienced differently, and may include physical, social, emotional, and/or sexual dimensions, there are no groups of girls that can be considered to be immune from violence, whether gender-based or systemic.

There is a significant need for the inclusion and recognition of the girl child in official policies, programs, and legislation. A fundamental recognition of the specificities of the gendered nature of violence, particularly as it intersects with age, race, class, ability, and sexual orientation is required. Hence, an understanding of the intersectional and interlocking character of violence should provide the framework for the development of policies, programs, and legislation. More importantly, there is a desperate need to incorporate an analysis of violence that takes into consideration the notion of a continuum of violent attitudes, behaviours, and practices. It is not enough simply to identify violence as occurring in the more extreme situations of murder, rape, and property crimes, or to permit interventions in the form of apprehensions and confinements when girls and young women transgress normative laws or moral

boundaries. There are clearly antecedent roots of violence that need to be identified, as they provide sites for effective and early intervention.

During the past decade, a team of community and academic researchers from the Alliance of Five Research Centres on Violence has examined the situation of the Canadian girl child, with particular attention to their experience of violence and the differential effects of gender socialization. The goal of this chapter is to identify issues relevant to policy and practice in relation to the safety, health, and well-being of Canadian girls. We begin by discussing the social and historical context of the girl child in Canada. This analysis is followed by a presentation of our research and its implications for policy and programming. A central issue that this chapter addresses is that generic violence-prevention programs, policies, and practices devised for “children and youth” may radically miss the mark for either boys or girls or both, unless they are assiduously gender-sensitive (Pepler, Madsen, Webster, & Levene, 2005). Due to differential socialization practices, primary and secondary prevention and tertiary intervention strategies, policies, and practices must effectively accommodate this major gender divide. Girls and boys require policy and programs that are explicitly and appropriately directed to them if they are to be effective (Moffitt, Caspi, Rutter, & Silva, 2001).

## **A Social and Historical Context of the Girl Child in Canada**

Throughout the past three decades, the plight of girls has received growing international attention, beginning in the 1980s when UNICEF adopted the phrase, “the girl child”. In recognition of the oppression of girls as a gendered concern, several organizations followed suit, proclaiming 1990 “The Year of The Girl Child”, and the 1990s as “The Decade of the Girl Child” (Berman, McKenna, Traher Arnold, MacQuarrie, & Taylor, 2000). At the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, the plight of girl children was highlighted as a significant issue of concern. The focus on girls was subsequently incorporated into the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action that was ratified by Canada. The Declaration identifies the following objectives that state parties are expected to achieve elimination of:

1. all forms of discrimination against the girl child;
2. negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls;
3. discrimination against girls in education, skills development, and training;
4. discrimination against girls in health and nutrition;
5. the economic exploitation of child labour and protection of young girls at work; promotion of:
6. the girl child’s awareness of and participation in social, economic, and political life; and
7. protection of the rights of the girl child, and increase of awareness of her needs and potential;
8. strengthening the role of the family in improving the status of the girl child; and eradicating:

9. violence against the girl child (United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, 1995, paragraphs 259-285).

The impetus for the Declaration came initially from women in developing countries throughout the world. In contrast, researchers, programmers, and policy-makers have largely overlooked the unique vulnerabilities of girls in Canada. In part, this omission may be attributed to a mistaken notion that gender equality has been achieved and that violence directed toward girls is a phenomenon that occurs “elsewhere”. The commonly held perception, both domestically and internationally, that Canada is a leader in the arena of progressive human rights and egalitarian gender relations, has further contributed to a reluctance to acknowledge the challenges girls face. The net result that strategically serves to obscure gender differences collapses these into the more generic rubric of “children and youth”.

Focusing on children and youth as categories deserving of societal attention is problematic. Firstly, it results in the negation of the compounding effects of the intersection of various forms of oppression. Thus, racism in combination with sexism and classism, or ableism in conjunction with sexual orientation and racism, are rarely treated as interlocking and systemic forms of domination (Razack, 1998). Rather, the tendency historically has been to treat these multiple forms of oppression as mutually exclusive, isolated, and distinct from one another. Secondly, the focus on children and youth strategically obfuscates the reality of gender-based violence and inequality, thereby positioning women as simply bearers and nurturers of children, and girls as future mothers.

The international human rights discourse surrounding the girl child is underpinned by a universal and stereotypical construction that presents her as a victim of backward, oppressive, and highly patriarchal cultures. Typically, the girl child is portrayed as the desperate and reluctant victim of female genital mutilation in Africa; the poverty-stricken child labourer and child bride in India; the child prostitute in Thailand; the undeserving victim of honour killing in the Middle East; the illiterate, uneducated, exploited, and uncared for child in Latin America; or the unwanted girl child in China. More recently, the girl child has entered the popular western imagination in the form of the fleeing, illegal refugee who is in need of protection on the one hand, and who signifies the barbarism of her country of origin on the other hand. All of these images are typically displayed prominently in fundraising initiatives of international aid organizations and in the mass media. The unstated premise is that atrocities inflicted upon girls occur elsewhere – in backward nations outside the realm of the “civilized” west, and more specifically, Canada.

Existing statistics reveal otherwise. Within Canada, the girl child is subjected to a range of violent behaviours, attitudes, and practices. For instance, adolescent wives between the ages of 15 and 19 are three times more likely to be murdered as compared to wives who are older (Rodgers, 1994). Girls are also more likely to be victims of sexual and physical assault by family members than are boys (Statistics Canada, 2000, pp. 31-37). It has been estimated that up to 75% of Aboriginal women under the age of 18 have experienced sexual abuse, 50% are under 14, and almost 25% are younger than 7 years of age (Correctional Service of Canada, as cited in McIvor & Nahane, 1998, p. 65). Child

poverty is also a significant concern. The Campaign 2000 Report Card on Child Poverty in Canada states that 23.4% of Canadian children live in poverty. Aboriginal children and children from racial minority communities constitute the largest populations facing poverty, at 52.1% and 42.7% respectively. Clearly, the situation of girl children in Canada is far from being equitable or in compliance with the obligations set forth in various international agreements.

As the statistics demonstrate, violence against girls and young women is pervasive and deeply entrenched in Canadian society. Yet, it often goes unnoticed. The masking and erasure of the gendered and racialized nature of violence contributes to a flawed understanding, with enormous ramifications for social policy, programs, and legislation. When violence is normalized, and when its manifestations are not considered until they have escalated and moved into the realm of institutional control, then potential sites of effective intervention and prevention are lost. This tendency is perhaps best demonstrated by the increased focus on the issue of girls as aggressors, and thus actors of violence (Underwood, 2003). In the current research we have consciously focused on the girl child as the recipient of violence rather than emphasizing the differential ways in which violence expresses itself for girls and boys. Instead we explicate the pervasiveness and manifestation of gendered violence and examine how the girl child both perceives and negotiates the resulting lived reality.

## **The Problem of Gender Neutrality**

Examining girls' lives through a gender lens is critically important for gaining an understanding of the fundamental dynamics of inequality at work. Gender analysis requires simultaneous attention to the lives of women *and* men, girls *and* boys. Although approaches to gender analysis differ, key features include understanding and documenting differences in gender roles, as well as the activities and opportunities available to girls and women (Chesney-Lind, 1997). A critically informed gender analysis does not treat women as a homogeneous group or gender attributes as immutable (Hoskins & Artz, 2004). Rather, it highlights the different societal expectations attached to gender attributes that may themselves vary across race, culture, class, income, and time (Randall & Haskell, 2000).

A critical gender analysis enables the evaluation of potentially differential and discriminatory impacts of government policies and practices on males and females from different backgrounds. This is especially important for interrogating the impact of policies, programs, and legislation that treat everyone the same regardless of gender, race, and/or class. In the context of violence against women and children, gender-neutral descriptions obscure root causes of violence, and leave underlying gender-related dynamics unnamed and invisible. Instead, structured and systemic social problems appear as random, un-patterned, and individualized.

## **Differential Gender-Based Socialization**

From an early age children learn what is expected of them as girls and boys. In many cultures, though not universally, there is a tendency toward socializing girls to adopt nurturing, caregiving roles, and for boys to adopt protector roles. This notion is conveyed

through the family, peers, schools, the community, the media, and virtually every other social institution. Typically, boys learn that aggression increases their ability to carry out their desires in the world. Despite some limits on their actions, the overall message is that boys can expect some latitude regarding aggressive behaviours. Girls, by contrast, are more typically encouraged to conform to social imperatives regarding clothing and demeanour to appear more desirable to boys. They are socialized to prioritize personal characteristics in the relationship domain. Girls' internalization of "being nice" is implicated in the array of physical and emotional health problems, including eating disorders, depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem, found with disturbing frequency among girls and young women (Jiwani & Brown, 1999). Beale (1994) suggests that friendship cliques for girls are more likely to serve as a defensive, protective strategy through which they are assured a place in the peer group, popularity, and thus power. Aggression is more likely to manifest itself verbally with same-sex peers (Moretti, Odgers, & Jackson, 2004). Boys tend towards more obviously competitive group activities such as team sports.

Girls and boys also learn from a young age their racial identity vis-à-vis the communities in which they reside. The early ethnic nature of identity interlocks with the socializing influences of sexism and classism, or disability and sexuality as the case may be (Jackson, 2004). Power is also established within peer groups. The gender messages revolving around prescribed roles of protector and protected resurface strongly in adolescent dating relationships. Accommodating themselves to sexually-based intimate relationships requires relinquishing some autonomy for both boys and girls, though the balance is not likely to favour the girl child, who is more apt to be socialized towards deference and accommodation to the wants and needs of others.

## Toward a Definition of Violence

Violence is explained and understood in diverse ways. Most commonly, violence is thought of in terms of physical actions that result in tangible harm to another. But this conceptualization overlooks an important aspect of violence that has increasingly gained acceptance: Psychological harm is a more insidious form of violence (Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, 1993). Its inclusion permits a more comprehensive and exacting gender analysis of everyday violence. It allows us to understand violence as a mechanism used to distribute and maintain power imbalances in society. These power imbalances are predicated on social relationships that channel oppression, and ultimately serve to sustain a social order based on dominant/submissive roles. Laws, policies, and other formal repositories of entrenched traditions normatively sanction these relationships.

Control is gained by depersonalizing people who are categorized as different or as having less value. Personal traits and aspects of social identity such as gender, race, or class, become tools for identifying this difference. When this control of individuals or social institutions becomes invested in specific groups, members of these groups have greater access to power and privilege. The prestige and status of elite group membership also conveys greater potential to influence marginalized groups.

An important element for understanding how inequality is structurally embedded is to consider how less powerful groups must interact with the dominant group. This shaping of the social arena induces less powerful groups to cooperate with acts that may be harmful to them individually and collectively, but they also internalize valuations of themselves and their communities as inferior. This is the subtlest form of violence in society. It is also seamlessly woven into social and institutional structures and is thus less likely to be penalized, save in situations explicitly resulting in harm.

Everyday violence in the lives of girls and young women takes a myriad of forms, including all manifestations of physical, emotional, verbal, and sexual abuse. In recent decades a new category of abuse, the impact of children witnessing violence (Jaffe, Wolfe, & Wilson, 1990), demonstrates that children can be victimized in indirect ways. Further, responses to various forms of violence are gender-specific (Jiwani, 1998). What all of these forms of violence have in common is that they serve to undermine the recipient's sense of self. Reinforcing a sense of powerlessness that limits functioning in both the private and public realms enhances this corrosive effect. Violence reflects an abuse of a power relationship, which for children, often stems from their age and size relative to the perpetrator, and for girls, stems from the combined vulnerabilities of age, gender, and social situation.

Our definition of violence recognizes the hierarchical nature of Canadian society. It is grounded in the findings of the first phase of our national project on violence prevention for the girl child (Jiwani & Brown, 1999). In essence, this definition highlights the power imbalances that lead to violence and is predicated on conceptualizing violence as spanning a continuum of attitudes, beliefs, and actions (see also Kelly, 1998). Thus, violence is:

the construction of difference and otherness; it entails inferiorizing or devaluing the "Other." Violence is further understood as the mechanism by which individuals or groups vie for, and/or sustain, a position of power in hierarchical structures defined by patriarchal values (as defined at the Alliance of Five Research Centres on Violence meeting, Winnipeg, 2001, as cited in Berman & Jiwani, 2002, p. 4).

## The Current Research

In recognition of the reality that girls in Canada routinely encounter subtle and explicit forms of violence, researchers from the Alliance of Five Research Centres on Violence undertook a national research study. One purpose of this project was to interrogate and challenge the binary construction which positions the West as a superior, altruistic, and progressive entity. By examining the situation of the girl child in Canada, we have deconstructed the universality of the categories of "children and youth". Moreover, we have challenged the denial and trivialization of gender-based violence as it affects and influences the safety and well-being of Canadian girls and young women. Our investigation sought to demonstrate that "the third world" exists in the so-called "first world" (Amos & Parmar, 1984; Mohanty, 1991).

Other objectives of this study were: to explicate the diverse ways in which girls are socialized to expect violence in their lives; to examine how social policies, legislation, and institutions alleviate, or perpetuate, the problems faced by this population; to explore dimensions and manifestations of the intersections between systemic forms of violence, such as racism and sexism, and violence occurring within intimate/familial relationships; and lastly, to propose constructive, meaningful strategies for implementing policy and programming changes geared to prevent gendered violence and to promote egalitarian interactions in the lives of girls.

## Theoretical and Conceptual Underpinnings

The theoretical and methodological perspectives derived from the principles of feminist theory and participatory action research guided the conceptualization and implementation of this project. Assumptions upon which this work are based include: that girls and young women are socialized to expect violence in their everyday lives; that, as a result of their socialization, violence becomes “normalized” for girls; that violence occurs in both subtle and explicit ways including psychological, emotional, physical, and sexual; and that girls from all socio-economic, racial, geographic, and cultural groups are affected by the multiple forms of violence, and experience it differently. Implicit in these assumptions, given the pervasive and insidious nature of many forms of violence, all girls are considered to be vulnerable and “at risk” when addressing the topic of violence.

During the first phase of this research, each of the five Centres carried out parallel research activities in our own communities. More specifically, we compiled an inventory of existing programs and services available to girls and young women, reviewed the literature on specific issues pertaining to violence, and lastly, conducted focus groups with service providers as well as girls and young women across the country. Overall findings from the first phase of the study revealed that girls are rarely considered to merit special attention. Rather, girls are treated monolithically, and tend to be collapsed within the gender-neutral category of “children and youth”. Additional findings revealed that: (a) There are few violence prevention initiatives in place; (b) existing initiatives are underfunded, sporadic, and intermittent; (c) there is a lack of program coordination and integration with existing services; (d) very few programs are gender-specific despite the need and demonstrated success of such programs; and, (e) the dichotomy between violence prevention and intervention is illusory.

One consequence of this dualistic assumption, however, is that there is rarely sufficient money for intervention and, at best, sporadic funding for prevention. While effective programs need to be gender-specific to address the differential outcomes of violence for girls and boys, the quality and quantity of regional programs designed to address violence in the lives of girls is relatively inconsistent. With the possible exception of Québec, effective programs are scarce and, for the most part, deal with the issue of violence in a gender-neutral manner. The differential gender role socialization of girls and boys needs to be recognized and used as a point of departure for the development of policies, programs, and legislation (Jiwani, 1998).

During the second phase of this project, each of the Centres studied a particular aspect or manifestation of gender-based violence in the lives of girls and/or programmatic aspects of violence prevention, legislation, and policies. This approach was consistent with our collaborative practice and was also sensitive to regional needs.

The Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children in London, Ontario, focused on the sexual harassment of girls and young women. The British Columbia/Yukon FREDA Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children examined issues contributing to the vulnerabilities of immigrant and refugee girls from racialized communities and the policies that influence their access to services and sense of belonging. The RESOLVE Tri-Provincial Network (Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan) focused on the sexual exploitation of girls and the policies and programs impacting on them. The Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Research on Family Violence (New Brunswick) and the Centre de Recherche Interdisciplinaire sur la Violence Familiale et la Violence Faite aux Femmes (CRI-VIFF) in Québec, each focused on programmatic aspects of violence prevention and the promotion of egalitarian interactions between genders, and in relation to the girl child. CRI-VIFF undertook an evaluation of the factors that contribute to the diffusion and implementation of effective anti-violence programs, while the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre focused on examples of successful interventions that highlighted the relative merits and limitations of gender-separate versus gender-integrated anti-violence programs.

## **Research Methodology**

From a feminist perspective, knowledge is not something that is produced in a vacuum by a sort of “pure” intellectual process. Instead, knowledge is value-laden and shaped by historical, social, political, gender, and economic conditions (Berman, Ford-Gilboe, & Campbell, 1998; Habermas, 1971; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Ideologies, taken-for-granted assumptions, and values that usually remain hidden and unquestioned, create a social structure that serves to oppress particular groups by limiting available options.

Principles underlying feminist research (Acker, Barry, & Esseveld, 1991; Fonow & Cook, 1991; Harding, 1987) that inform this study are: (a) The research process is based on valuing the experiences of girls and young women from their own perspective, and challenging taken-for-granted assumptions and stereotypes; (b) the inclusion of a diversity of girls’ and women’s experiences; (c) reflexivity in the research process, allowing both investigators and participants the opportunity to reflect on the content and process of the study and to share these reflections through dialogue; and (d) knowledge produced by the research has the potential to foster change in the participants, in the community, or both. The notion of research as praxis, or the combination of research and action, is a basic tenet. A critical/feminist “agenda”, then, focuses on creating knowledge that has the potential to produce change through personal or group empowerment, alterations in social systems, or a combination of these.

The present research is framed within this paradigm, with particular reference to the tradition of Participatory Action Research (PAR). However, the emphasis on PAR varied among the Centres and was contingent upon the specificity of the topic of investigation and the contextual factors operative in each of the different regions: Some centres

concentrated their efforts on the analysis of specific policies and legislation, while others focused on evaluating programs, and still others combined policy and narrative analysis based on the lived realities of girls and young women. Similarly, the levels of analysis differed depending on the nature and subject of the investigation: Some centres framed their investigations with particular reference to international policies and obligations, while others focused on provincial legislation and local policies.

## Findings

The results of these investigations demonstrate that violence operates at numerous levels spanning the continuum from individual lived realities to systemic institutional structures. Further, violence is discursively represented in strategic omissions and gender-neutral perspectives embedded in policies, programs, and legislation. Although a detailed presentation of the findings from each Centre is beyond the scope of this chapter, we present some of the overarching theoretical, programmatic, and policy considerations below.

### Doing Research From the Ground Up

Employing a PAR approach led to privileging the voices and experiences of girls and young women. Their experiences inform our understanding of the ways in which policies and legislation, wittingly and unwittingly, shape their lives. Their stories poignantly communicate the erosion of self that is an outcome of violence, whether that violence is orchestrated in a series of daily acts or instigated in a single horrific incident. Moreover, their stories tell us about the absence of any kind of effective recourse. Thus, for girls who experience everyday sexual harassment or everyday racism, or a combination thereof, there are few places to turn to for assistance and support. This is not to imply that these girls are simply “victims”. On the contrary, their experiences reveal a form of agency that is both highly creative and self-sustaining. Nevertheless, institutions need to support these efforts, for example, by providing “safe spaces” and being vigilant about the differential impact of policies and programs. Failure to do so results in the normalization and embeddedness of these forms of violence.

The gendered nature of socialization suggests the ways in which social institutions (e.g., schools, family, laws, and media) produce and reproduce the girl child. A common concern articulated by the girls in our research dealt with the nature of “fitting in”. Implicit in this concern was a normatively grounded acceptance of what they were fitting in to. Most commonly, taken-for-granted knowledge referred to internalized standards of femininity, and conformity. It is apparent that fitting into something requires prior knowledge of it; dominant institutions in society transmit such knowledge both subtly and explicitly, begging the question of whose interests are served by the perpetuation of these complex interwoven forms of oppression. Keeping girls in their place maintains the existing power and privilege hierarchies, entrenching and perpetuating the patriarchal order most overtly recognizable in dominant structures of power. Gender, as Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992) among others have noted, is used to signify boundaries between groups. Gender also becomes a contested site of multiple discourses regarding sexuality, ethnic group membership, and traditionalism versus modernism/westernization discourses (Handa, 1997).

For effective change to occur, it is imperative that institutional sites for intervention be defined and appropriate resources be harnessed toward implementation. Factors that influence the identity formation of girls as girls, as racialized and sexualized “others”, and as disabled, need to be understood and recognized as critical points of departure for the development of equitable policies and programs. Basic needs such as food, shelter, and protection from violence constitute fundamental rights for all girls. As structural needs, they are key to identity formation. Similarly, peer group and family supports are integral to the development of a positive and healthy identity. They contribute to a sense of belonging that, in turn, reduces alienation and marginalization. Yet, as our current research demonstrates, these fundamental human rights and supports are not always available to the Canadian girl child.

## **Gender-Neutral Policies and Legislation**

Canada is a signatory to many international conventions, accords, declarations, and protocols. While many of these differ, they share a common commitment to the protection of human rights and the enjoyment of civil liberties. Our analysis reveals a significant disparity between these commitments as articulated in the international arena and the lived reality of Canadian girls and young women.

The commitment toward gathering gender-specific data remains of significant concern despite international obligations. While there have been progressive attempts to gather such data, only in rare situations are such data utilized for social policy formation. For example, available statistics clearly demonstrate the heightened risk and vulnerability of Aboriginal girls. The study conducted by the RESOLVE Tri-Provincial Network, and reported by Ursel (2001, 2006), further demonstrates the factors that contribute to their marginalization and sexual exploitation. Nevertheless, current legislation and policies have failed to factor this reality into programs and policies. Similarly, while there is a paucity of information relating specifically to immigrant and refugee girls, there is nonetheless widespread recognition at the international level and among researchers regarding the heightened vulnerability of this population. Yet again, existing policies and programs do not reflect this recognition, nor do they embrace an intersectional analysis of the multiple forms of oppression that impact on the lives of these girls and young women. Further, it had been established that gender-sensitive violence prevention programming is necessary, but few such programs have been developed or monitored for efficacy. Significant exceptions are located in Ontario and in New Brunswick (Cameron, 2004).

In part, this failure to address the specificities and risk factors shaping the lives of Canadian girls is rooted in a current climate of backlash. Within this context, it is “safer” to collapse gender, race, and class differences within the categories of “children” and “youth”. Under the guise of “the best interests of the child”, federal, provincial, and territorial governments (albeit not uniformly) embrace legislation and policies that seemingly protect all children. While this appears to be in compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the focus on the girl child, as outlined in the Beijing Platform for Action, is rarely incorporated into policies and legislation. One exception appears to be Québec where the political climate surrounding the

issues of youth protection laws, sexual aggression, dating violence, and children who witness violence, has resulted in a policy environment that more explicitly recognizes the differential impact of violence on girls and boys. Nevertheless, the specific needs of the girl child are consistently omitted in Canada's federal, provincial, and municipal policies and programs. Instead, part of the discourse of backlash seems to be an emphasis on the supposed gender equality of girls and boys, women and men. This has resulted in a preoccupation with the supposed increase in aggression of girls. In this respect, girls are seen to have achieved gender parity in the realm of their potential to participate in violence.

However, despite the seemingly benevolent intentions of protecting children, it is interesting to note the sentiments and rationale underpinning some of the existing policies and legislation. The research conducted by the RESOLVE Centre addressed the issue of prostitution and the sexual exploitation of girls and young women. This research also analyzed the impact of the Secure Care Act (British Columbia) and the Protection of Children In Prostitution (PCHIP) (Alberta). As the RESOLVE research indicates, governments seem to be most committed to protecting these rights in those instances where interventions are mandated by the criminal justice system; in other words, where laws have been broken. Where interventions seem to be most preventive or appropriate, but where no legal infractions have occurred, then these interventions rest largely on the shoulders of underfunded non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and advocacy groups:

From a policy perspective there is a conundrum: The category of children most in need of services are [sic] for the most part children “on the run” from “controlling” agencies, which are the agencies most securely funded to provide the services. Thus the evolution of securely funded programs with a mandate to protect child sexual abuse victims may have the unintended effect of frightening these children/youth away because of their fear of, or aversion to the “control” components of these services (Busby et al., 2002, p. 108).

This pattern is particularly apparent in the subtle, yet pervasive, effects of sexual harassment. This issue was the focus of the research conducted by the Centre in London, Ontario (Berman, Straatman, Hunt, Izumi, & MacQuarrie, 2002). A key finding from this research was the inefficacy of current policies in dealing with the continuum of everyday violence and the limitations of prevailing gender-neutral programming and policies. As the Ontario Centre's research amply demonstrated, sexual harassment is supported and sustained in a multitude of ways, with long-term deleterious physical and emotional effects that include – but are not limited to – eating disorders, suicidal ideation, marginalization, and addictions. The loss of self that is an outcome of the constant and insidious forms of sexual harassment, often labelled as teasing and bullying, is profound. While most schools and communities have various “zero tolerance” policies intended to deal with these subtle forms of violence, these policies tend to embrace a gender-neutral and minimizing perspective. Issues regarding race, class, gender, and sexual orientation are negated and/or trivialized. Nevertheless, in the context of scarce programming, these services provide a limited and needed form of intervention. However, they are underfunded, heavily reliant on volunteer labour, and sporadic.

A similar trend is evident in the research conducted by the British Columbia/Yukon FREDA Centre where the research focus was on gender racialization, with particular emphasis on racism as a form of violence. The FREDA Centre's research, framed within the context of international, national, and provincial policies affecting the girl child, highlighted a multitude of inadequacies and program and policy inconsistencies. An important contribution of the FREDA Centre's research was an articulation of definitions of violence as understood by young women and girls of colour from immigrant and refugee backgrounds. Of particular note is their identification of racism as the principal form of violence they encounter: Intimate forms of violence, such as sexism and classism, were background structural issues simply taken for granted. Anti-violence school policies often do not deal with racism. Rather, racism is simply articulated in the school context as anti-tolerance to multiculturalism. The latter is most obviously manifested and celebrated as an appreciation of cultural differences, provided these differences do not spill over the confines of safe topics such as food, dress, and dance.

As per the critique of policies and legislation articulated in the research conducted by the RESOLVE Tri-Provincial Network and the British Columbia/Yukon FREDA Centre, the gaps between existing policies, legislation, and programs versus the international obligations ratified by Canada offer glaring examples of inequities, and highlight the disjuncture between rhetoric and reality (Cameron, 2001). Such disjuncture is most obvious in areas of legislation that potentially violate the Charter rights of the girl child.

## **Programmatic Considerations**

The disparity between publicly, internationally stated commitments and the actual reality of girls and young women in Canada is highly surprising in one sense given the extensive groundwork conducted by community organizations, advocates, and researchers dealing with gender-based violence over the last few decades. As the research of Centre de Recherche Interdisciplinaire sur la Violence Familiale et la Violence Faite aux Femmes (CRI-VIFF) and the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre reveals, there are numerous and frequently irreconcilable factors involved in the adoption and implementation of effective gender-based anti-violence programs. Critical amongst these are issues of core funding, political commitment, and the involvement of all stakeholders.

The linkage model identified by CRI-VIFF is highly congruent with the participatory action research paradigm used by our Centres, as well as by organizations worldwide. Strategies to insure safe spaces for girls to engage in their own violence prevention initiatives were suggested as well by the research of the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Research Center in New Brunswick (Cameron, Normandeau, & McKay, 2003). Further, as the RESOLVE Tri-Provincial Network's research reveals, communities most affected by an issue are more likely to utilize programs and services that are perceived to be less coercive and more flexible. The Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre's contribution also underscores the necessity of involving communities in the planning and implementation of successful programs (Cameron & Creating Peaceful Learning Environments Team, 2002). More pertinently, the New Brunswick Centre's research demonstrates the imperatives of conducting both gender-

specific and gender-integrated programming, provided these are done with the full recognition of the gendered nature of violence and the unique concerns influencing girls and young women (Cameron, 2004). Despite such positive evidence, the PAR paradigm, with its emphasis on the involvement and mobilization of community partners, has tended to be accorded little legitimacy within the dominant research, funding, and policy-making spheres. It is refreshing, however, to notice a growing acceptance of this approach, especially within government.

## Conclusion

The Alliance of Five Research Centres on Violence is currently engaged in an intensive process of dissemination of our research findings. This process includes dialogue, discussion, and analysis with our community partners and relevant stakeholders regarding the recommendations developed. Regional roundtables, invitational conferences, and community forums have been held across Canada and in Ottawa. Consistent with the participatory nature of this research, the dissemination strategies include sharing and discussing what we have learned with those who are most directly affected, namely the girls and young women who have so generously and poignantly shared their stories, their fears, their hopes, and their dreams for violence-free lives.

While each Centre has focused on a different aspect of violence in girls' lives, they collectively and conclusively represent the current shortcomings of policies and programs pertaining to the lives of girls and young women who are differently situated. More specifically, this research reveals the urgent need to provide solidly funded programs and services to ameliorate the condition of girls, and to fulfill the societal obligation of protecting them from violence. Awareness, then, of the different faces and compounding effects of interlocking and intersecting forms of violence must be the point of departure for any further investigation, policy formation, and program implementation. We clearly cannot wait until the violence that exists escalates into lethal forms before intervention is made possible or mandated.

## References

Acker, J., Barry, K., & Esseveld, J. (1991). Objectivity and truth: Problems in doing feminist research. In M. Fonow & J. Cook (Eds.), *Beyond methodology: Feminist scholarship* (pp. 133-153). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Amos, V., & Parmar, P. (1984). Challenging imperial feminism. *Feminism Review*, 17, 3-19.

Anthias, F., & Yuval-Davis, N. (1992). *Racialized boundaries: Race, nation, gender, colour and class and the anti-racist struggle*. London: Routledge.

Beale, C. R. (1994). *Boys and girls: The development of gender roles*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Berman, H., Ford-Gilboe, M., & Campbell, J. C. (1998). Combining stories and numbers: A methodological approach for a critical nursing science. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 21(1), 1-15.

Berman, H., & Jiwani, Y. (2002). *In the best interests of the girl child*. London, ON: Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children.

Berman, H., McKenna, K., Traher Arnold, C., MacQuarrie, B., & Taylor, G. (2000). Sexual harassment: Everyday violence in the lives of girls and women. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 22(4), 32-46.

Berman, H., Straatman, A-L., Hunt, K., Izumi, J., & MacQuarrie, B. (2002). The unacknowledged face of violence in the lives of girls. In H. Berman & Y. Jiwani (Eds.), *In the best interests of the girl child* (pp. 15-44). London, ON: Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children.

Busby, K., Downe, P., Gorkoff, K., Nixon, K., Tutty, L., & Ursel, J. (2002). Examination of innovative programming for children and youth involved in prostitution. In H. Berman & Y. Jiwani (Eds.), *In the best interests of the girl child* (pp. 89-114). London, ON: Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children.

Cameron, A. (2001). *From rhetoric to reality: Canada's obligations to the immigrant and refugee girl-child under international law*. Unpublished manuscript. Vancouver, BC: FREDA.

Cameron, C. A. (2004). Schools are not enough: It takes a whole community. In M. L. Stirling, C. A. Cameron, N. Nason-Clark, & B. Mediema, (Eds.), *Understanding abuse: Partnering for change* (pp. 269-294). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Cameron, C. A., & Creating Peaceful Learning Environments Team. (2002). *Worlds apart...coming together: Part 1: "She said, he said"; Part 2: Together we can*. [Evaluation research findings leading to community facilitator training video (32 minutes) and accompanying handbook (16 pages)]. Fredericton, NB: Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research.

Cameron, C. A., Normandeau, S., & McKay, S. (2003, April). *Gender sensitive violence prevention intervention*. Discussion hour facilitated at biennial meetings of the Society for Research in Child Development, Tampa, FL.

Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women. (1993). *Changing the landscape: Ending violence: Achieving equality* (Final Report). Ottawa: Author.

Chesney-Lind, M. (1997). *The female offender: Girls, women, & crime*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Fonow, M., & Cook, J. (Eds.). (1991). *Beyond methodology: Feminist scholarship as lived research*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Guba, E., & Lincoln, Y. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105-117). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Habermas, J. (1971). *Knowledge and human interests* (J. J. Shapiro, Trans.). Boston: Beacon Press.

Handa, A. (1997). *Caught between omissions: Exploring “culture conflict” among second generation South Asian women in Canada* (Doctoral dissertation). Toronto: University of Toronto, Graduate Department of Sociology and Education.

Harding, S. (1987). Is there a feminist method? In S. Harding (Ed.), *Feminism and methodology* (Introduction, pp. 1-14). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Hoskins, M. L., & Artz, S. (2004). *Working relationally with girls: Complex lives – complex identities*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.

Jackson, M. A. (2004). Race, gender, and aggression: The impact of sociocultural factors on girls. In M. M. Moretti, C. L. Odgers, & M. A. Jackson (Eds.), *Girls and aggression: Contributing factors and intervention principles* (pp. 85-99). New York: Academic Press.

Jaffe, P. G., Wolfe, D. A., & Wilson, S. K. (1990). *Children of battered women*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Jiwani, Y. (1998). *Violence against marginalized girls: A review of the current literature*. Vancouver, BC: FREDA.

Jiwani, Y., & Brown, S. M. (1999). *Trafficking and sexual exploitation of girls and young women*. Vancouver, BC: FREDA.

Kelly, J. (1998). *Under the gaze: Learning to be black in white society*. Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing.

McIvor, S. D., & Nahane, T. A. (1998). Aboriginal women: Invisible victims of violence. In K. Bonnycastle & G. S. Rigakos (Eds.), *Unsettling truths: Battered women, policy, politics, and contemporary research in Canada* (pp. 63-69). Vancouver, BC: Collective Press.

Moffitt, T. E., Caspi, A., Rutter, M., & Silva, P. A. (2001). *Sex differences in antisocial behaviour: Conduct disorder, delinquency, and violence in the Dunedin longitudinal study*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Mohanty, C. (1991). Under Western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses. In C. T. Mohanty, A. Russo, & L. Torres (Eds.), *Third World women and the politics of feminism* (pp. 51-80). Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press.

Moretti, M. M., Odgers, C. L., & Jackson, M. A. (2004). Girls and aggression: A point of departure. In M. M. Moretti, C. L. Odgers, & M. A. Jackson (Eds.), *Girls and aggression: Contributing factors and intervention principles* (pp. 1-5). New York: Academic Press.

Pepler, D. J., Madsen, K. C., Webster, C. D., & Levene, K. S. (Eds.). (2005). *The development and treatment of girlhood aggression*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Randall, M., & Haskell, L. (2000). *Gender analysis, inequality, and violence: The lives of girls*. Unpublished manuscript.

Razack, S. (1998). *Looking white people in the eye: Gender, race, and culture in courtrooms and classrooms*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Rodgers, K. (1994). Wife assault: The findings of a national survey. *Juristat*, 14(9). Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada.

Statistics Canada. (2000). *Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2000*. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics.

Underwood, M. K. (2003). *Social aggression among girls*. New York: Guilford.

United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women. (1995, September). Fourth World Conference on Women: Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Paragraphs 259- 285 on The Girl Child). Retrieved March 25, 2010, from <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/girl.htm>

Ursel, J. (February 2001). *Report on domestic violence policies and their impact on aboriginal people*. Submission to Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission. Winnipeg, MN: University of Manitoba.

Ursel, J. (2006). Over policed and under protected: A question of justice for aboriginal women. In M. Hampton & N. Gerrard (Eds.), *Intimate partner violence: Reflections on experience, theory and policy* (pp. 80-89). Toronto: Cormorant Press.

## Appendix

### Introduction to Recommendations

The recommendations we present here are a “work in progress”. Some of these are targeted to particular ministries or sectors of society. Others are more general in nature. While we acknowledge that some of our recommendations are already being enacted at the local, provincial, or federal level, most are not. Collectively, they reflect our shared vision of what we hope, and believe, is possible.

The most far-reaching recommendation we make concerns the need for the inclusion and recognition of the girl child in official policies, programs, and legislation. The implementation of this recommendation requires a fundamental recognition of the specificities of the gendered nature of violence, particularly as it intersects with age, race, class, ability, and sexual orientation. Hence, an understanding of the intersectional and interlocking character of violence should provide the framework for the development of policies, programs, and legislation. More importantly, there is a desperate need to incorporate an analysis of violence that takes into consideration the notion of a continuum of violent attitudes, behaviours, and practices. It is not enough to simply identify violence as occurring in the more extreme situations of murder, rape, and property crimes, or to permit interventions in the form of apprehensions and confinements when girls and young women transgress normative laws or moral boundaries. There are clearly antecedent roots of violence that need to be identified, as they provide sites for effective and early intervention. The following recommendations outline the necessity for supporting, through funding and legitimacy, ground-up, community-based and community-driven programs and initiatives that are clearly tailored toward prevention and intervention. Our recommendations reflect what we believe is necessary for the reduction and elimination of violence in the lives of girls and the promotion of egalitarian interactions between genders. The interventions we propose should occur in situations of normalized and subtle forms of violence, as well as in its more extreme manifestations.

### General Recommendations

- That the gendered nature of violence be fully recognized with awareness of the multiple ways in which violence manifests and impacts on the lives of girls and young women.
- That the legitimate status of the girl child be recognized and named in the public realm, and that the social obligations which arise from her gendered experiences of violence be clearly stated.
- That additional funding resources that reach out to the girl child be provided rather than waiting for her to overcome internal and external obstacles to reach out to the system.
- Not all forms of violence land on the radar screen of the criminal justice system. Nor is it typical for the girl child to reach out to parents, teachers, or even the health care system unless encountering more extreme forms of violence.

- That programs and policies provide emotional, cognitive, and physical spaces that enable the girl child to engage in healthy relationships and give voice to the full range of her thoughts, feelings, and experiences.
- That the context of sexuality and attitudes about male and female roles generally, as well as the societal conceptualization and sexualization of youth, be acknowledged as contributing factors to violence and sexual exploitation.

## Recommendations for Governments

- That the federal, provincial, and territorial governments cooperate to implement working groups comprising front line service providers, researchers, advocates, policy-makers, and legislators. These working groups should also be mandated to monitor compliance and work toward the harmonization of domestic policies and legislation so that they are in alignment with Canada's international obligations.
- That the constitutional divide between federal ratification and provincial implementation of treaties be eliminated. The first step is to emphasize that this division is a violation of the spirit of the treaties, and include this information in all research which deals with international human rights instruments.
- That popular education tools about women's equality rights and international human rights instruments be developed and disseminated for groups seeking equality on behalf of women and girls.
- That the federal government play a direct role in promoting secure funding for national and local NGOs by utilizing their 3-year pilot project funds to lever a greater commitment on the part of provincial governments toward the maintenance of services demonstrated to be effective.
  - And that the federal government fund studies required to demonstrate the effectiveness of these programs.
- That governments sponsor national and regional workshops and conferences to assist service providers to share and develop best practices in the field.
- That governments critically evaluate and amend legislation such as the provision to obtain parental/guardian consent for minors to access services and assistance.
- That governments allocate a percentage of their "housing for the homeless" funds specifically to street youth and children and youth at risk for involvement in prostitution.
  - Shelter services and safe homes are desperately needed in many communities.
- That governments allocate enriched funding for employment readiness and employment training courses for children and youth exploited through prostitution, immigrant and refugee youth, and those marginalized by virtue of disability, sexuality, and class.
- That governments provide additional funding and support to immigrant and refugee girls and their families.

- That governments implement their commitment to publicize and communicate to the Canadian people the nature and extent of their international obligations.
  - These obligations should be contextualized within the current framework of federal, provincial, and territorial responsibilities.
- That governments provide basic services such as food, shelter, clothing, and safety for girls and young women who have experienced violence or who are at risk of experiencing such violence.
- That governments provide stable and adequate funding to community organizations to facilitate the provision of such basic necessities as food, shelter, clothing, and, above all, safety to girls and young women.
- That governments establish secure funding for organizations that cater specifically to the wide-ranging needs of girls and young women.
  - That funding for such organizations not be vulnerable to the “political winds of change”.
- That there be improved methods of consultation with governments about Canada’s international positions.
- That NGOs be supported to develop and disseminate evaluation tools (such as shadow reports and report cards) to be submitted to government and the United Nations during Canada’s reporting periods.
- That international human rights law and norms be used to interpret the Charter and other domestic laws in domestic equality litigation. This should include the Conventions themselves, General Recommendations of relevant Committees, Concluding Remarks of relevant Committees on Canada’s reports under Conventions, and any documented discussion on Canada’s reports between Canada and the relevant Committee.

### **Recommendations for Research**

- That governments promote and fund research that specifically outlines the health sequelae of different forms of violence.
  - This includes research that focuses on the impact of systemic forms of violence such as racism, ableism, sexuality, and experiences of marginalization.
- That governments promote and fund gender-based research that centres the voices of girls, and their interaction with adult caregivers and service providers.
- That research funded by governments embody a critical anti-racist perspective in keeping with the intent of such international instruments as the Convention for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.
- That research be conducted in a feminist participatory action framework and research partners make every effort to disseminate the results in a community-friendly fashion which simultaneously inspires community action.
- That non-traditional forms of research be encouraged, particularly those that

involve girls and young women as full partners in all phases of the research process.

- Priority should be placed on those projects that include girls and young women from diverse and marginalized communities.
- That community organizations be encouraged and provided full recognition and compensation for their partnership in all phases of the research process.
- That qualitative research be encouraged to examine the impact of specific legislation and programs on the immigrant and refugee girl child.

### **Recommendations for Education**

- That adequate funding be provided for the development, assessment, and dissemination of effective violence prevention and intervention programs and strategies.
  - In recognition of the intersectionality of gendered violence and racism, such programs and strategies should be required to incorporate an anti-racism, anti-oppression framework.
- That violence prevention/intervention programs be fully institutionalized in schools by incorporating them into the mandates of various provincial ministries of education and by integrating them into the curricula as compulsory components.
  - That funding for such prevention/intervention programs include compensation for a coordinator/facilitator.
- That schools be supported to implement and evaluate phases of violence prevention/intervention programming so as to ensure their continual refinement and effectiveness.
- That school curricula reflect culturally diverse perspectives and information and that these be framed within an anti-racism paradigm.
- That testing methods used within schools be free of cultural and gender bias.
- That the participation of all girls, and most especially marginalized girls, be encouraged in work co-op programs, mentoring, and curriculum development.
- That teacher training and education about racism, and its fundamental link with the perpetuation of gendered violence, be required.
  - Such training extends to an awareness and appreciation of the potentially deleterious effects of discrimination on academic performance and general behaviour.
- That the development and sustainability of peer mentoring programs for immigrant/refugee girls from racialized communities be fostered.
- That training for school personnel be provided in order for them to be able to respond to everyday instances of racism and sexism.
- That school counsellors be trained within an anti-racism paradigm so that their services are not merely cultural prescriptions but are based on a recognition of

unequal power relations and social hierarchies extant in society.

- That media literacy courses be made a mandatory component of school curricula and that initiatives toward this end be encouraged and funded within the non-profit sector and the private sector of media organizations.
  - That such initiatives enable girls and young women, especially those from racialized communities, to tell their own stories.
- That girls and young women be taught strategies to challenge and change harmful behaviour that they encounter, and that such knowledge be a critical component of any initiative. These strategies will focus on individually and collectively empowering girls and young women, while simultaneously eliminating any structural propensity for victim blaming. Such knowledge will be a critical component of any initiative.
- That Canadians be educated on the extreme poverty levels of immigrant and refugee families and visible minority groups generally. That such education emphasize that this is the product of international and domestic institutionalized racism.
- That immigrant and refugee and visible minority youth be educated on their rights under the various provincial and the federal Human Rights Acts. It is imperative that these youth be equipped to recognize when racism is a factor in hiring, and use their legislated recourse to address the wrongdoing.
- That schools develop comprehensive strategies to increase awareness of human rights, especially children's rights.

### **Recommendations For Health Service Providers**

- That health professionals fully recognize violence as a critical determinant of health.
  - That health services respond to the many and varied effects of the entire spectrum of violence.
- That health care providers recognize that the multitude of health problems experienced by girls are often the result of exposure to, and experiences of, violence.
- That health care providers be educated to elicit and respond to the particular vulnerabilities of girls and young women.
- That there be provision for more generalized health services for sexually exploited girls and young women as the health impacts of violence are often ill-defined.
  - That health care service providers receive training and education regarding the impacts of marginalization and the pernicious effects of subtle and systemic forms of violence.
- That “one stop” health care facilities which provide a variety of services addressing different health issues for girls and young women be established with their full participation.
- That consent requirements be waived in situations where they might impede the

delivery of, and access to, health care services for girls and young women.

- That mandatory reporting requirements not interfere with access to health services for young women and girls who are experiencing violence.
- That violence and gender inequality be included as integral topics of education and communication in all health prevention and promotion initiatives.
- That there be a consistent delivery of health care services to all marginalized girls and young women and that this be predicated on principles of universal access without regard to the official status or age of this population.

### **Recommendations for Media**

- That a serious attempt be made to reflect a more representative portrayal of racialized communities and perspectives in the Canadian mass media, as per Canada's international obligations, domestic policies, and legislation.
- That educational, consciousness-raising manuals, videos, CD-ROMs, and other forms of programming and educational material be developed and be accessible to teachers, employers, and those who are interacting with girls and young women.
- That girls and young women be involved in the production and dissemination of their own forms of media, and that the relevant agencies be encouraged to distribute work that reflects their concerns and realities.
- That governments at all levels be encouraged to meet our obligations under international law regarding children's exposure to harmful media content.

### **Recommendations for Programs and Service Delivery**

- That immigrant settlement services be provided with funding to hire cultural liaison workers and additional services for settlement in order to reduce the isolation of girls and their families.
- That counsellors and others who are familiar with different cultural traditions be hired within schools and service organizations.
  - That such counsellors be trained within an anti-racism paradigm so that their services are not merely cultural.
- That substance abuse/addiction be formally recognized as a co-determinant with other forms of violence, and most especially sexual exploitation.
- That services aimed at the prevention of violence in the lives of girls be responsive to those less visible and more subtle, yet nevertheless real, needs of girls and young women who have experienced violence in its many forms.
  - That such services take advantage of the window of opportunity that opens up when girls seek out voluntary services on their own initiative rather than being coerced to participate in the latter as a result of state intervention.
- That securely funded programs with a mandate to provide services to girls exposed to violence be required not to exert a control and coercive orientation.
  - That such programs have a voluntary character that facilitates choice on the part of girls and young women.

- That generic and specialized services for girls who have experienced violence be available and accessible.
  - That services be designed to respond to the range of outcomes corresponding to the continuum of violence.
- That girls be given safe gender-segregated opportunities to discuss violence in their lives.
- That interventions be developed that capture the positive attention of boys who can be negatively affected by programming that is not appropriate to their stage of awareness.
- That the girl child be taught strategies of healthy resistance.
  - That health-seeking behaviours which represent resistance to oppressive circumstances be redefined as indicators of physical and emotional well-being.
- That a feminist process evaluation of the programs that are currently in place, and those being initiated, be encouraged.
- That economically restricted rural and isolated communities be assisted to develop human and other resources necessary to implement action and change.



## CHAPTER 8

# ILL HEALTH AND DISCRIMINATION: THE DOUBLE JEOPARDY FOR YOUTH IN PUNITIVE JUSTICE SYSTEMS

Bernard Schissel

**Abstract:** The author argues that despite the rhetoric of Canada's youth justice system framework, there is a striking lack of funding for, or commitment to, alternatives to formal justice when dealing with marginalized young people. One consequence of this is an epidemic of ill health, both physical and emotional, among at-risk youth. It is this reality, not criminality, that is the defining characteristic of this vulnerable population. To underline this point, the author presents his research on marginalized Aboriginal youth, and notes that the public perception of young people in conflict with the legal system is defined by fear and hostility rather than sympathy. He also discusses examples of micro-communities that understand the epidemic of ill health plaguing marginalized youth and that provide an antidote to the condemnation of children and youth in the larger society. He notes that for children and youth, involvement with the law is a profound individual and collective health risk and argues against conservative law and order politics. He emphasizes the importance of research driven intervention, crime prevention, and alternatives to the criminal justice system.

The dilemma for marginalized youth in conflict with the law is clear. They face a high likelihood of being treated rather harshly with respect to conviction and sentencing and they are characterized by relatively poor levels of physical and emotional health. The reasons for these phenomena have been debated over and over, but the conclusions, at least from good social policy work, suggest the following: (a) Relative privation dictates a high risk for conviction and incarceration; (b) despite the legal/human rights and social welfare mandates of the previous Young Offenders Act and the recent Youth Criminal Justice Act, many young offenders lack access to adequate legal resources and access to adequate health care; (c) most younger offenders, because they live on the margins of society and because of their age, lack political power; and (d) discrimination, either by omission or commission, exists in the justice system and dictates especially harsh treatment for Aboriginal youth and youth from relatively poor families and communities (Schissel, 2006; Bell, 2002a). Despite the rhetoric of Canada's youth justice system framework, there is a striking lack of funding for, or commitment to, alternatives to formal justice. In many ways, our inability to improve the lives of young people in trouble with the law, especially those who are marginalized, is fuelled by our antipathy to young people in general (Côté & Allahar, 2006; Giroux, 2003a, 2003b). The result of our indifference to the real needs of young people at risk is the focus of this chapter.

The manifestation of this indifference is what I describe as an epidemic of ill health among at-risk youth. Ill health, not criminality, is the defining characteristic of the young. Based on research on marginalized youth that I have conducted over several years, I demonstrate that for youth involved in the legal system, poor health provides a double jeopardy in already marginalized lives. As we will see, however, the public's general perception of youth, especially youth in trouble with the law, is certainly not characterized by sympathy. In the end, I provide examples of micro-communities that understand the epidemic of ill health amongst marginalized youth and provide an antidote to the condemnation of children and youth in the larger society. These micro-communities attend to the needs of high-risk youth by creating contexts devoted primarily to the improvement of physical and emotional health.

## **The Condemnation of Age and Race**

There is a rather common attitude amongst the Canadian public that young people are more disrespectful now than in the past, and that they are, in the end, more dangerous. The blame for this "adolescent misbehaviour epidemic" is placed on various sources including the family, but most vigorously, on the justice system. The majority of Canadians feel that the youth justice system is too lenient and that youth are "getting away with murder". The associated perception is that if the youth justice system would simply be made tougher, youth would stop misbehaving. Politicians and other lawmakers are very sensitive to public opinion polls and often act to satisfy the fears of the public. In the case of young offenders, the Canadian government's typical reaction has been to tinker with the law in hopes of responding to the fears and demands of the voting public. Canada's Youth Criminal Justice Act is, in many ways, a typical legal reform response that has contradictory philosophies: one of genuine concern that many young offenders need alternatives to incarceration for their own welfare – that they need to be reintegrated into the community – and one of overriding concern that society needs to be protected from young people who break the law. For example, the act has provisions for community-based alternatives to the justice system but at the same time, it is devoted to a reduction in the age at which a child can be considered a young offender and a reduction in the age at which a young offender can be transferred to adult court, and ultimately, adult prison. Both provisions are based on the concept of "societal protection" despite research that suggests that youth in adult prisons face incredibly high rates of physical and emotional jeopardy (Schiraldi & Zeidenburg, 1997).

I maintain that children and youth represent now, maybe more than ever, political and economic scapegoats. At a time when societies are becoming more sensitive to and cognizant of the rights of a diversity of citizens, children and youth are left out of the human rights debates. The reality is that children and youth are no more criminal or dangerous than in the past and this contradicts the public perception that they are. Traditional sociological and criminological approaches to crime and punishment have played a significant role in fostering a generalized belief that "evil" children and youth are "out there", that they are either born bad or made bad by bad cultures in which they live. The public policy and academic research that has a "bad kids" focus has centred on the individual and his or her socio-cultural characteristics, while largely ignoring the possibility that attacking children and youth is a political act with political and economic

motivations. More critical approaches to crime and justice contend, on the other hand, that punishing children and youth through a rigid justice system benefits those in positions of power. In the end, the definition of youth crime and the extent to which we deal with children and youth deviance is largely a reflection of how important children and youth are to the Canadian political economy.

It is important to state here that the political/legal attack on children and youth in Canada is highly racialized. Currently, the Province of Saskatchewan locks up more young offenders per capita than all other jurisdictions in the developed world. The largest proportion of these young offenders is of Aboriginal ancestry, a proportion much larger than the proportion of Aboriginal children and youth in the population at large. My research reveals several relevant demographic phenomena: About 45% of youths with young offender dossiers in Saskatchewan Social Services are of Aboriginal ancestry; 88% of the youth in conflict with the law in urban outreach programs in Prince Albert and Edmonton are of Aboriginal ancestry; and, 65% of the youth in closed custody in Saskatoon and 41% in North Dakota are of Aboriginal ancestry. The proportion of Aboriginal youth in the Province of Saskatchewan in 2001 is 15.1% of all youth; in the next 15 years the Aboriginal youth population is expected to be 26% of the entire youth population. These statistics illustrate a marked overrepresentation of Aboriginal youth in the young offenders system, an even more exaggerated overrepresentation in closed custody, and, at the current rates of apprehension, a potential for an even larger young offender population in the next 15 years.

In addition to the excessive incarceration of Aboriginal youth, the discourse of youth crime is often fraught with words and phrases that implicate Aboriginal youth (Schissel, 2006; Saskatchewan Justice, 2004) or African-Canadian youth (Henry, Tator, Mattis, & Rees, 2000) or other racialized categories of young people as particularly troubled or dangerous. As mentioned previously, the central focus of this chapter is that youth in trouble with the law are characterized primarily by jeopardized health. Ironically, as we will see, the discourse that condemns youth is largely about health and medicine; medical discourse is part of the condemnatory language that is used to isolate race (and class and gender). The following story illustrates how such condemnation occurs, especially in the context of race.

### **Scapegoating Youth: A Story of Race and “Justice”**

In October of 1998, Serena Nicotine, a First Nations young offender residing in a halfway house in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, in concert with another young offender, murdered Helen Montgomery, the owner of the halfway house. The murder was unprovoked and the two young women showed little apparent remorse for their crime. The subsequent drama that played out in public discourse, in large part within the local and national press, revealed an oft-told story of young people who have no respect for law and order, ultimately no respect for anyone but themselves, and who are born into circumstances whereby they were neglected or damaged by dysfunctional parents. In fact, headlines such as *Blood and Betrayal: Fetal Alcohol Syndrome: Serena Nicotine – Sins of the Mother* (Saskatoon StarPhoenix, November 27, 1999, p. E1) were commonplace as the press tried to frame the story of the offenders within a context of race, gender and single-motherhood, and trans-generational criminality.

These popular culture versions of youth and cultural nihilism were interposed with accounts of well-meaning people who are the unwitting victims of killer kids. And, in the course of the legal intrigue that followed the murder, the community launched a petition, in concert with conservative provincial and federal politicians, to lobby the federal government to increase the severity of penalties under the Young Offenders Act. The law, especially the police, supported the community lobby and made public declarations that citizens must be protected from youth violence. Ultimately, the province shouldered the blame for not building enough open and closed custody facilities and for not building enough jails.

The Crown prosecutor, in concert with local politicians and community leaders, was successful in having Nicotine's case moved to adult court. Despite the initial 8-year sentence in adult prison, the lobby to toughen up the Young Offenders Act became intensified, and both the Crown and politicians were adamant that the law was too lenient in dealing with young offenders. And, as we now know, that law has been reformed with intensified provisions for dealing with young offenders deemed to be a danger to the society. Both the Crown and politicians recommended harsher punishment as an effective deterrent and a moral response. In the years since Ms. Nicotine's original incarceration, she has been a perpetrator of a hostage incident and several other violent confrontations in prison.

What is interesting about the Nicotine case, however, is that the social justice debates about the history of the offender as a victim at a very young age rarely occurred. When such commentary did occur, it was relegated to the last few lines of news reports. Even the legal debates ignored the facts that both girls had been violently victimized as children. Nicotine had witnessed the violent death of her father. Both girls were "systems kids" who had been in and out of the justice and social welfare system for most of their formative years. These are very important justice details because they help us understand and should help us deal with highly disadvantaged children and youth. Amazingly, the Crown prosecutor, as the voice of the law, never engaged in this important discourse, even when social justice organizations raised important issues. The discourse that played out in the press instead focused largely on young people who have no respect for law and order.

From a socio-legal perspective, this case is instructive because it helps us understand how the law, in concert with public opinion, has exceptional ideological power. When the law's voice is essentially devoid of social justice, especially in high profile cases such as Nicotine's, and when the law stands for alarmist politics in violation of the social welfare tenets of the youth justice system, its primary function might conceivably be to legitimate and/or appease orthodox political lobbies. In the Nicotine case and others, the law is unable to dispense social justice. It unavoidably renders opinions that condemn those who are already condemned, especially young people like Nicotine who are disconnected from family and community, who are Aboriginal, who are young and defiant, and who have been damaged at a young age. I cannot remember a time when the law officially went against public opinion and declared that young offenders are victims before anything else. In other words, the *de facto* mandate of the law is not to provide justice but to account for injustice. Simply put, the law has less to do with social justice, differential oppression, social inequality, prejudice, or discrimination and more to do with collective condemnation of those who stand outside what we deem to

be conventional society. More disturbingly, the law creates racialized, gendered, and classed versions of bad citizens. In the case of Nicotine, her Aboriginality, her youth, her upbringing, her gender, her poverty, and her socio-cultural background were traits that helped to damage her character in the eyes of the world and relegate her to the ranks of the expendable. There is a very good chance that she will be declared a dangerous offender and will remain in jail the rest of her life, potentially 70 or 80 more years.

As we observe and analyze cases such as these, it is evident that the law's purpose to provide justice and to protect the rights of young people is suspect. This contention is no more evident than when we observe the relative physical and emotional condition of children and youth in custody or who have been deemed "at risk". The following analytical results describe the health crisis in which young offenders and kids on the street find themselves.

### Throwaway Youth: Life on the Streets

One of the main arguments in my work is that, for youth, poverty simultaneously dictates health risk with criminal justice involvement. The following data show how living on the margins of society significantly endangers the health of society's most marginalized youth. In 1999, Kari Fedec and I (Schissel & Fedec, 1999) conducted a study of street youth by examining the files of youth offenders with respect to the Young Offenders Act. A subset of these data was based on young offenders who had been charged for being involved in the sex trade. The youth in this study were largely street youth in the City of Saskatoon and constituted a cross-section of youths who had been convicted under the Young Offenders Act and who were involved in the sex trade. The following table (Table 1) compares the health risks for street youths involved in the sex trade compared to young offenders who were not. As most of the literature on youth and street life suggests, prostitution is a response to economic need, and the youth involved represent the most marginalized adolescents in society.

**Table 1: The Health of Young Offenders by Race and Involvement in the Sex Trade**

Involvement in the Sex Trade				
Health Outcomes	Non-Aboriginal		Aboriginal	
	Yes (n=14)	No (n=240)	Yes (n=38)	No (n=100)
<b>Substance Abuse</b>				
None	12.5	48.1	7.9	28.3
Alcohol	25	17.6		8.1
Alcohol/drugs	62.5	34.3	92.1	63.6
<b>Severity of Alcohol Abuse</b>				
Not severe		50.6	13.5	33.7
somewhat severe	41.9	35.1	40.5	30.6

**Table 1: The Health of Young Offenders by Race and Involvement in the Sex Trade (continued)**

severe	58.1	14.2	46	35.7
<b>Suicidal Tendencies</b>				
none	78.2	50	52.6	75.8
some	15.1	50	13.1	11.1
severe	6.7		24.2	13.1
<b>Suicide Attempts</b>				
no	30.8	90.8	57.9	81
yes	69.2	9.2	42.1	19
<b>Self-Abuse/ Slashing</b>				
no	38.5	93.3	68.4	92
yes	61.5	6.7	31.6	8
<b>Involvement in the Sex Trade</b>				
<b>Health Outcomes</b>		<b>Non-Aboriginal</b>	<b>Aboriginal</b>	
<b>Physical Health</b>				
poor	33.3	5	17.1	4.1
moderate	16.7	24.3	42.9	42.9
very good	50	70.7	40	53
<b>Teen Pregnancy</b>				
no	37.5	71.4	55.9	64.3
yes	62.5	28.6	44.1	35.7
<b>Physical Assault (Outside of home)</b>				
no	83.3	90.6	58.3	78.4
yes	16.7	9.4	41.7	21.6
<b>Sexual Assault (Outside of home)</b>				
no	50	89.4	62.9	87.4
yes	50	10.6	37.1	12.6

The two most important phenomena in this table are the astonishing increase in health risk for youth involved in the sex trade and the absolute levels of health risk for both groups of youth. The table shows clearly that for both non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal young offenders, being involved in the sex trade results in relatively high rates of health risk. Specifically, substance and alcohol abuse pose immediate problems for all youth, but again, especially for youth in the sex trade. For example, 58.1% of non-Aboriginal youth involved in the sex trade have severe alcohol problems, as do 46% of Aboriginal youth; these percentages are considerably higher than those for

youth not involved in the sex trade. For youth who are living dangerous and unpleasant lives, substance abuse may be the only reasonable forum for normalizing an otherwise intolerable life situation.

The jeopardy for youth on the street is further evidenced by indicators of self-injury. Specifically, 69.2% of non-Aboriginal youth involved in the sex trade have attempted suicide as have 42.1% of Aboriginal youth. Similar results appear for suicidal tendencies; 24.2% of Aboriginal youth and 6.7% of non-Aboriginal youth involved in the sex trade have severe suicidal tendencies. Finally, while a small percentage of all youth in the study has engaged in slashing, 61.5% of the non-Aboriginal youth in the sex trade have slashed themselves as have 42.1% of Aboriginal youth; the percentages for those not in the sex trade are appreciably smaller but still distressingly present. The phenomenon of slashing is important in understanding the trauma of marginality. The research on slashing has argued that it is a form of emotion-masking behaviour typical of people who are in extremely traumatic life situations, exemplified by the high rates of slashing amongst women prisoners (Shaw, 2000; Faith, 1993). The alarmingly high rates of slashing amongst youth prostitutes reveal quite clearly the extreme psychic trauma under which they live. That a considerable number of youths in this study engage in slashing is indicative of the marginal and traumatic nature of life for many young offenders.

In terms of overall physical health, it is clear that not all youth in our society are healthy but youth in the sex trade suffer considerably more poor health than those who are not. For example, only 50% of non-Aboriginal youth in the sex trade and only 40% of their Aboriginal counterparts have very good health. Furthermore, pregnancy poses a health risk for female street youth and also places their unborn children at risk. Pregnancy is also an indicator of high-risk sexual activity so this subgroup of street youth is obviously engaging in unprotected sex: “Unprotected sex is a valuable commodity in the sex trade and the highest profits are obtained from the prostitution of young girls who are willing to engage in unprotected sex” (Schissel & Fedec, 1999, p. 38). Female street youth not only run the risk of pregnancy, they obviously are exposed to sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS and carcinogenic STDs. Pregnancy rates are alarmingly high for non-Aboriginal youth in the sex trade, 62.5% of whom have been pregnant.

Lastly, it is important to consider the risk of victimization as an ever-present health risk for youth. Clearly, in terms of physical assault, Aboriginal youth are highly vulnerable to physical assault; for example, 41.7% involved in the sex trade have been physically assaulted to the extent that they have required medical care. The findings for sexual assault are similarly alarming. For youth involved in the sex trade, 50% of non-Aboriginal youth and 37.1% of Aboriginal youth have been sexually assaulted.

It is clear from these data that young offenders, as marginalized youth, are exposed to severe medical trauma. Their health risks include substance abuse, self-injury, high-risk sexuality, and extreme levels of victimization. Importantly, for the most marginal person in the society, the inner city street kid who sells her or his body to survive, the medical jeopardy is startling.

## Youth Declared as "At Risk"

The data for this section are based on self-administered questionnaires and face-to-face interviews with young people who had been or were in trouble with the law in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and North Dakota. The 2002-2003 survey was conducted on 163 youth who were either in closed custody, street programs for youth in open custody, and street programs for non-custodial youth deemed at risk and focused on issues of socio-economic background, familial experiences, and experiences with the legal system. The research was intended to understand the lives of youths who are highly marginalized and disaffiliated and who end up in the justice system by investigating the dilemma that youth face, especially as they come to confront youth justice systems or agencies of social assistance. It explored, in part, the racialized nature of youth justice in western Canada and in one northern U.S. state.

For the analysis, I compare male and female youth of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal ancestry in an attempt to understand the gendered and racialized nature of the mechanisms through which youth who live on the margins of the society come to be identified and defined as criminal or "at risk". By correlating dimensions of health and criminal involvement, I show that the characteristics that describe youth in conflict with the law are, for the most part, not criminal characteristics but characteristics of ill health, both individual and communal. Table 2 illustrates the extent of poor condition for both male and female and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth. The intention in presenting this table is to show the absolute levels of health outcomes and legal involvement and the associations between these variables and race and gender.

**Table 2: Health Outcomes and Legal Involvement for Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal youth and for male and female youth**

	Non- Aboriginal	Aboriginal	Female	Male	Total
<b>Health Outcomes</b>					
Physical Health Rating	Below average	7.70%	11.70%	<b>12.30%</b>	<b>9.40%</b>
	Average	63.50%	69.40%	<b>75.40%</b>	<b>63.20%</b>
	Above average	28.80%	18.90%	<b>12.30%</b>	<b>27.40%</b>
		N=52	N=111	N=57	N=106
Times depressed	Rarely	<b>42.30%</b>	<b>48.60%</b>	<b>26.30%</b>	<b>57.50%</b>
	Sometimes	<b>17.30%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>33.30%</b>	<b>18.90%</b>
	Often	<b>40.40%</b>	<b>24.30%</b>	<b>40.40%</b>	<b>23.60%</b>
		N=52	N=111	N=55	N=106

<b>Attempted Suicide</b>	Yes	32.70%	29.10%	<b>42.10%</b>	<b>23.80%</b>	30.20%
	No	67.30%	70.90%	<b>57.90%</b>	<b>76.20%</b>	69.80%
		N=52	N=110	N=57	N=105	
<b>Self-Injury</b>	Never	65.40%	73.60%	64.90%	74.30%	71%
	Sometimes	32.70%	21.80%	29.80%	22.90%	25.30%
	Often	1.90%	4.50%	5.30%	2.90%	3.70%
		N=52	N=110	N=57	N=105	
<b>Victimized at school</b>	Yes	19.40%	20.80%	<b>10%</b>	<b>25.90%</b>	20.80%
	No	80.60%	79.20%	<b>90%</b>	<b>74.10%</b>	79.80%
		N=31	N=53	N=30	N=54	
<b>Attacked</b>	Yes	51.60%	60.70%	63.60%	53.70%	57.50%
	No	48.40%	39.30%	36.40%	46.30%	42.50%
		N=31	N=56	N=33	N=54	
<b>Sexually assaulted outside of home</b>	Yes	22%	23.40%	<b>45.60%</b>	<b>10.60%</b>	23%
	No	78%	76.60%	<b>54.40%</b>	<b>89.40%</b>	77%
		N=50	N=111	N=57	N=104	
		Non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal	Female	Male	Total
<b>Health Outcomes</b>						
<b>Physically assaulted by a stranger</b>	Yes	48%	50.90%	47.30%	51.50%	50%
	No	52%	49.10%	52.70%	48.50%	50%
		N=50	N=108	N=55	N=103	
<b>Legal Involvement</b>						
<b>Age category of first offence</b>	under 12 yrs.	<b>46%</b>	<b>27.40%</b>	<b>13.90%</b>	<b>43.70%</b>	35%
	12 - 14 yrs.	<b>40%</b>	<b>50.70%</b>	<b>58.30%</b>	<b>41.40%</b>	46.30%
	15 - 18 yrs.	<b>14%</b>	<b>21.90%</b>	<b>27.80%</b>	<b>14.90%</b>	18.70%
		N=50	N=73	N=36	N=87	

	Never	<b>41.20%</b>	<b>74.70%</b>	<b>84.40%</b>	<b>52.60%</b>	62.70%
Number of convictions	Once or twice	<b>35.30%</b>	<b>16.50%</b>	<b>6.70%</b>	<b>30.90%</b>	23.20%
	More than two	<b>23.50%</b>	<b>8.80%</b>	<b>8.90%</b>	<b>16.50%</b>	14.10%
		N=51	N=91	N=45	N=97	
Ever moved to adult court	Yes	<b>23.10%</b>	<b>11.20%</b>	<b>7.30%</b>	<b>19.20%</b>	15.10%
	No	<b>76.90%</b>	<b>88.80%</b>	<b>92.70%</b>	<b>80.80%</b>	84.90%
		N=52	N=107	N=55	N=104	
Risk of re-offending	Low	<b>48.10%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>62.70%</b>	<b>50.50%</b>	54.60%
	Moderate	<b>19.20%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>23.50%</b>	<b>21.80%</b>	22.40%
	High	<b>15.40%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>13.70%</b>	<b>14.90%</b>	14.50%
	Extremely high	<b>17.30%</b>	<b>4%</b>		<b>12.90%</b>	8.60%
		N=52	N=100	N=51	N=101	
Police contact	Never	<b>22.40%</b>	<b>31.10%</b>	<b>37.80%</b>	<b>23.40%</b>	28.10%
	1 to 4 times	<b>49%</b>	<b>52.20%</b>	<b>53.30%</b>	<b>50%</b>	51.50%
	5 or more times	<b>28.60%</b>	<b>16.70%</b>	<b>8.90%</b>	<b>26.60%</b>	20.90%
		N=49	N=90	N=45	N=94	

Because the data in Table 2 is presented as both descriptive and associational (with race and gender), the significant relationships are presented in boldface. The table is quite complex so I will leave it to the reader to look at the data in detail. I wish, however, to point to some of the more stark findings that frame the arguments in this chapter. For example, the attempted suicide, self-injury, and depression outcomes illustrate quite vividly the extent of jeopardy in which these young offenders live: 30% of the youth have attempted suicide and 29% have slashed/self-injured; furthermore, over 50% of the youth are depressed (as per clinical evaluation) at times. Interestingly, for the depression variable, female youth show higher levels of depression compared to their male counterparts, as do non-Aboriginal youth compared to Aboriginal youth. It is interesting to note, here, that these three indicators of health jeopardy do not correspond to the self-assessment of health. In fact, only 10.4% of all youth indicate that their general health is poor despite the findings regarding suicide, self-injury, and depression. Clearly, the young people in this study overestimate their own levels of health or have fairly low expectations as to what constitutes being healthy.

As we proceed through the table, it becomes clear that the health of the young people in this research is jeopardized by lack of safety and security. This is especially apparent for the experiences of being attacked and assaulted outside the home. For

example, 57.5% of the youth report being attacked violently in their lives, 23% report being sexually assaulted by a stranger (this experience is significantly greater for female youth than male), and 50% report being physically assaulted by a stranger. Clearly, the context in which these young people live exposes them to considerable health risk from assault.

The last variables in this table indicate the degree to which the youth in this study reported being involved with the justice system. The two most glaring findings involve the age of first offence and whether they had been moved to adult court. Firstly, 35% of the youth report being first involved with the law under the age of 12. Secondly, 15.1% of youth report being moved to adult court, an indication largely of the extent of their involvement with the law and the law's predisposition to deal with young offenders quite harshly.

Although these legal involvement variables are primarily descriptive, I wish to discuss the differences especially between racial categories. It is clear from the significant relationships dealing with race, Aboriginal youth compared to their non-Aboriginal peers are older at first offence, have fewer convictions, are moved to adult court less, have lower risks of reoffending, and have lower police contact. Aboriginal youth, empirically, are less involved in criminal offences than non-Aboriginal youth. The reality, however, is that Aboriginal youth have higher rates of incarceration and longer sentences than do non-Aboriginal youth, despite the fact that non-Aboriginal youth seem to be more involved with the law (Saskatchewan Justice, 2004; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples [RCAP], 1996; Schissel, 1993; Hamilton & Sinclair, 1991). Clearly, there are inequities across race for youth in the justice system. The public perception is that Aboriginal youths are highly criminogenic because they have high rates of involvement in the justice system. In fact, their involvement in the justice system is not borne out by their criminal involvement, especially in contrast to non-Aboriginal youth.

The question that remains, then, is this: How does it come to pass that a system predicated on principles of justice treats problems of individual and community health as problems of criminality?

## A Story of an At-Risk Society

The answer to the aforementioned question lies with an understanding of how marginalized people, including children and youth, fit into Canada's political economy. As we will come to see, questions of health, social justice, and the creation and sustainability of healthy communities are subordinated to the demands of industrialization. York (1992) in his book, *The Dispossessed*, confronts these issues as he links the development of a resource-based economy to the destruction of peoples and communities. He describes how rapid industrialization in Canada and the expropriation of Aboriginal lands and communities in the 1950s and 1960s eroded Aboriginal communities to the point of extinction. Interestingly, he uses an example from Australia to make the point that Aboriginal people are in jeopardy in many industrialized countries. He reveals how the connections between industrial exploitation and industry-based education have made children and youth suffer:

For centuries, the children of Elcho Island were educated by their relatives. Today the Western educational system has intruded, cutting across the responsibilities of the aboriginal adults and placing a barrier between man and boy. . .the aboriginal adolescent is doubly excluded. On the one hand he is blocked from sharing in the benefits of European society by educational deficiencies and by the fear of breaking step; on the other, he is ambivalent about many of the old ways. Some he has forgotten altogether . . . Gasoline sniffing is a result of the disorientation of the Murngin adolescents . . . Adolescents reflect the conflicts of a people. (York, 1992, p. 17)

In this simple, poignant example, we see how cultural invasion through education has a direct and profound effect on the welfare of children and youth. The problem of gas sniffing is epidemic in many exploited communities in North America and Australia, and the question remains why gasoline sniffing has taken over the lives of some young people. Most importantly, from a critical criminological perspective, we need to understand how the trauma that marginalized children and youth and their families experience – and their resulting conduct – gets translated into definitions of criminal deviance or pathological culture rather than jeopardized health. For at the end of the day, in Canada, Aboriginal children and youth have a greater likelihood of being convicted for criminal violations than do their non-Aboriginal counterparts. Importantly, courts rarely understand or take into account issues of historical oppression or cultural devastation in their day-to-day dealings with Aboriginal young offenders. And, in many cases, the criminality of Canada's youth is largely tied to substance use and abuse, issues that in any other context would be considered as health issues.

A Canadian example presents a heart-rending reminder that the structural conditions of a society can have devastating effects on children and youth. On January 26, 1993, six Innu youth in Davis Inlet, Labrador, tried to commit suicide together by sniffing gasoline. Their attempt at collective death was thwarted by an addictions counselor who heard the youth declare that they wanted to die. Subsequently, 14 youth from this small community were airlifted south for medical treatment, but the legacy of colonialization and government neglect remained, in that 95% of the adult population was addicted to alcohol, 10% of the children and youth were chronic gasoline sniffers, and 25% of the adults had attempted suicide. Seven years later, the trauma for Davis Inlet had grown. In November of 2000, 20 Innu children were, again, airlifted to the Goose Bay treatment centre as an interim reaction to another epidemic of gas sniffing among the children. Of the 169 children (ages 10-19) living in Davis Inlet at the end of 2000, 154 have attempted gas sniffing and 70 of them are chronic sniffers. The socio-economic reality for Davis Inlet, like many other northern Aboriginal communities in Canada, is one of historical resource exploitation and/or community relocation, and the imposition of Euro-Canadian education.

## Healthy Contexts

How we respond to issues of risk and marginality for children and youth indicates the quality of social justice in our society. Unfortunately, to date, Canada's record appears to be mostly a record of condemnation and not of concern (Schissel, 2006; Green

& Healy, 2003; Bell, 2002b; Mallea, 1999). There are, however, pockets of caring where change does occur, if only at a rather microscopic level. Importantly, these rather rare examples are important because they illustrate what just social policy can accomplish, especially policy that is based on healing (and health) and not on punishment.

In their struggle to dispense real justice, the courts are faced with several problems in regard to social justice and youth. Most importantly, the courts are overburdened with young offender cases and closed custody institutions have been historically filled to overflowing, although since the inception of the Youth Criminal Justice Act, the youth closed custody population has decreased. Secondly, even if the courts were not oversubscribed, theirs is not an activist mandate; they are mostly unable or unwilling to address issues of poor health and social inequality (Green & Healy, 2003). Thirdly, the majority of youth plead guilty and are, therefore, merely processed in and out of the system. This fact is borne out, in part, by the reality that youth are not always represented by counsel and when they are represented by legal aid or court-appointed counsel, the legal time given to them is minimal and they rarely have their cases contested (Schissel, 2002). Quite clearly, given these concerns, effective alternatives to “incarceration justice” are needed and, most importantly, these alternatives need to be connected to health.

Interestingly, a health-oriented, holistic approach to youth justice does not preclude the role of the justice system. In fact, it asks that policing and jurisprudence expand to incorporate issues of social justice, social and personal health, and preventive social reform. In short, alternative schools and programs for healing in conventional schools, in concert with the legal system, become places where high-risk children and youth learn not only educational and occupational skills (and meaningful apprenticeships) but also the skills for well-rounded citizenship and individual development.

I have explored several examples of how this might work. The School Officer Liaison Program in the City of Regina has police officers, as mentors and advisors, spend time in schools with students. The program bridges the gulf of mistrust between youth and the law and is a typical example of how law and education blend. Another example from the City of Saskatoon illustrates how law and education combine to create a context of trust that goes a long way toward preventing crime. Several years ago, the city implemented its first community police station in the heart of the inner city, close to several elementary schools. The police officers in this detachment took it upon themselves to visit the schools on a daily basis to interact with the students either through sports or just plain talk. The principals and staff of one of these schools indicated how important this practice was to the lives of the students and how effective the police were in creating a safe and secure environment for the students. In effect, the staff was saying that law enforcement practised in this manner is more effective than the typical crime control/“lock-em-up” mandate of traditional police forces. Unfortunately, due to fiscal pressures, the community station and its programs were cancelled. The ongoing resource problem is exacerbated by the reality that the police are asked to perform a diversity of tasks including militaristic-style policing. Their mandate is unclear.

We need to look, however, no further than the boundaries of Canada for effective and important alternatives to the formal youth justice system. Mediation and alternative measures for young offenders, as originally mandated by the Young Offenders Act and

now by the Youth Criminal Justice Act, have been used as alternatives to youth courts. The John Howard Society has for years been involved in programs that stress keeping kids out of custody and giving them opportunities whereby they can make reparation and, at the same time, receive counselling to restore themselves. Healing and Sentencing Circles are common in many Aboriginal communities in Canada and, especially in Northern communities, are replacing the system of circuit court law that tended to “process” people with little concern for cultural and personal considerations.

For centuries, First Nations communities have dealt with anti-social behaviour through a community well-being approach that has melded the best interests of the community with the best interests of the offender. The simple, yet profound basis of this healing philosophy is that it is more appropriate and ultimately safer for the society to bring the offender back into the fold than to punish or remove her or him from the community. When we consider that the typical repeat young offender in Canadian society is one whose past is typified by abuse and punishment, it makes little moral or practical sense to continue this abuse and punishment with legal sanction. Furthermore, from a healing perspective, when someone violates the community or when someone is punished the community suffers collectively. The goal, then, should be to reduce punishment and, as a result, to reduce personal and collective victimization.

Interestingly, within Canada we have examples of success that also occur at the legislative level. The Province of Québec has made a devoted effort to keep young offenders out of the justice system and ultimately out of jail. They have, as a solution, moved for several decades toward community-based programs based on healing and rehabilitation (Green & Healy, 2003; Hogeveen & Smadych, 2001). In a very real sense, Québec has pursued a policy that involved diversion from formal law to treatment in the community, in the true spirit of the Young Offenders Act and the Youth Criminal Justice Act. Importantly, their achievements stand out in Canada as a relative success story. For example, in 1999, one in 57 youth who committed an offence in Québec was incarcerated compared to one in 17 in Ontario (Mallea, 1999). The Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in the last few years has made a concerted effort to keep young people out of custody by relying on family, friends, and other devoted community members to take an active role in caring for young offenders (Newfoundland, 2001). Their program has been successful in maintaining one of smallest provincial youth crime rates in Canada. So, the goal of diversion and care appears to be not just an illusion, but rather may have real justice potential when it is constructed within social justice principles. The question remains, however, whether simply diverting young people from the justice system actually translates into policy that is effective in reducing young people’s criminal involvement (Doob & Cesaroni, 2004). The following stories show how social justice principles can work at a grassroots level.

### **Alternative Schools, Health, and Justice: Won Ska Cultural School**

Won Ska Cultural School in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, exemplifies an alternative education program that provides a context in which troubled youth can heal. Won Ska deals with First Nations street kids and adults who have been in trouble with the law, identified by social services as “at risk”. The school began in 1993 in response to a high

dropout rate for Aboriginal students in Prince Albert. First Nations and Metis parents, community agency workers, teachers from other schools who had a vision for a new school, and youth created an alternative program for the school.

Won Ska is successful for several reasons. Firstly, for many of the students who have been in trouble with the law, this school is the only place that deals with the fundamental issues that resulted in their legal problems. Secondly, the school mandates that the transition from childhood and adolescence to adulthood is a fundamental priority. The school is administered in a democratic way in which students, essentially, have the final say in their educational development. The teacher as mentor is of profound importance. The mentoring process includes not only training and the transmission of knowledge, but also the creation of a context in which ideas are shared and in which the mentors listen as much as they speak. Most students in this school have missed out on the basic, fundamental rights of young citizens: a concerned and patient audience; a physically and emotionally safe context; a place where what they say is as important as what they learn; a chance to influence their life circumstances; an opportunity to make explanation and reparation; and a chance to see and emulate responsible, caring adults.

The last point, the need for adult role models, is paramount to this new paradigm of healing and learning. It is through interaction with and emulation of caring adults that marginalized youth develop basic life skills which include the ability to perform the day-to-day tasks that facilitate living, to understand what constitutes responsible parenting and responsible intimacy, to overcome the frustration that lands them in trouble, and to learn to trust people in positions of authority. The majority of students in alternative educational programs (students who are from the streets or who are in young offender alternative measures programs), when interviewed expressed an overwhelming fear and distrust of the police and other legal officials and a generalized discomfort in conventional schools. Significantly, many of these students, when asked where they would be without an effective alternative school, immediately responded that they would likely be in jail or no longer alive.

By using education to teach academics, life skills, and self-empowerment, the school is able to take the negative legal experiences of its students and develop a system of healing that emphasizes healthy, non-offending lifestyles. In doing so, the teachers focus on the future and essentially ignore the histories of their students, thereby circumventing labels such as “at risk”, “young offender”, or “high needs” and concentrating, rather, on what the students need to develop intellectually and socially. This policy of discarding labels is very much in accord with First Nations spirituality and healing which focuses on the elimination of guilt and blame from the healing process. At a very basic level, the concept of “at risk” is based on individual blame.

Second, the school operates on the basis of a non-authoritarian consensus system: Students decide on curriculum, marking, school social events, and discipline or justice issues which are imposed upon them in conventional systems. The rationale is that one of the basic problems for marginal youth (and all youth, more generally) is their disenfranchised position in the world. By investing their lives with basic human rights, the school teaches students that, despite the legal labels that have been placed on them, their role within the school is one of importance and credibility. As a result, retention

rates are high; when students discussed their educational satisfaction, their main comments focused on their wish to stay at school 24 hours a day.

The basic problem for Won Ska School, despite its record of success with highly damaged students, is that it is constantly fighting for enough physical and financial resources to provide a comfortable school. Moreover, it is continually fighting for credibility. The school poses several problems for the local school board. It does not use a standard curriculum because the programs are students-driven. Furthermore, one-to-one learning/mentoring is expensive. The school, as well, rejects offender/risk designations for its students and does not engage in dialogue with the school board and the community regarding potentially dangerous students. Finally, it allows students to remain in school as long as they wish, some well into their 20s, and this violates the traditional educational focus on high school as a place for adolescents only. Ironically, the things that make Won Ska highly successful are the same things that jeopardize its existence. Standardized, factory-like, fiscally efficient education unfortunately remains the norm in education, often to the detriment of students as unique individuals (Giroux, 2003b).

At the end of the day, however, by using community resource people as much as possible, Won Ska Cultural School provides the opportunity for adults to interact with troubled youth as real people, an important first step in neutralizing the stigma of their being a young offender.

### **Education as a Vehicle for Holistic Healing: Cote First Nations**

It is remarkable in Aboriginal-based alternative schools how education and health are held as inseparable. Education, in such a philosophical context, is part of the process through which the personal, social, and physical environments are healed.

Several years ago, with several colleagues from the University of Saskatchewan, I had the good fortune to work with the Cote First Nation on the preliminary development of social and environmental proposals for the community. The Cote First Nation is a Saulteaux community located in southeastern Saskatchewan. The community is relatively small and, as is typical of many Aboriginal communities in western Canada, the land has been “mined” by non-Aboriginal farmers for decades. The absentee tenants have often left the land denuded and damaged and intensive agriculture has contaminated the land and the water. The Cote people were aware of this and began to work on a proposal to take back their land, in large part to improve their own levels of health. They envisioned a series of land use proposals that involved organic farming and reforestation. The other issue faced by the community was the loss of its children to urban areas. Cote is relatively isolated from any urban centre and, like many rural communities, had a difficult time providing adequate employment or social opportunities for its young people. As a consequence, the dropout rates from high school were quite high as were the rates of youth in trouble with the law.

The community, in resolution of the social and physical problems they faced, proposed that a reformed education system could, in part, hold the answer. There is a new school on the reserve and the people proposed that the school become the centre of the healing project. The idea was that the school curriculum must reflect not only

the formal academic needs of the students but also the community's ability to teach beyond formal education. The priority in this regard is that children and youth learn to be citizens of the earth, that they gain an appreciation for and an understanding of the earth as a living environment, and how this environment is the basis of their own physical and emotional well-being. Their proposal involved the use of the school day to teach formal requirements and the local environment to teach life skills. This time outside of formal school would entail working on environmental projects on the reserve, learning traditional knowledge and languages, designing and implementing new projects involving land restoration, and engaging in physical activities to improve levels of fitness amongst the students.

The initial project was a community garden on school property in which the children participated as growers. The Cote community was convinced that time on the land would instil in the children and youth an appreciation of the importance of food and how safe food can be grown without chemicals, a sense of how land and people are inevitably connected, and a sense of proprietorship over their own well-being. In this new and rather unique education paradigm, the teachers would be prepared to share the instruction duties with Elders from the reserve with the goal of providing students with both traditional and contemporary knowledge. The students would learn the "science" of horticulture but also the spirituality involved in the human affinity with the land. Furthermore, in their interactions with the Elders, the students would be exposed to their cultural history and immersed in the Anishnabe language. In a more general sense, what the interactions with Elders teach is a connectedness across generations, something that has been lost in conventional societies that ask people to disengage when they reach the age of 65. Such a context also allows for older generations to learn from children and youth, a potential that is almost non-existent in the conventional industrial world.

The Cote proposal does not intend to turn back the clock. It does, however, advise that if students do not understand the past, if they cannot conceive of living on reserve in a relatively pastoral context, they will be lost to the Cote community. It also does not diminish the importance of formal education, for the Cote people see the value of reading, writing, arithmetic, and more. They do believe, however, in a rather revolutionary way, that you cannot bombard students exclusively with formal education without alienating them from the community. Their proposal then, was to fuse formal learning with traditional learning in an "on the land" context. For example, one of the initial projects, which would be connected to the school, was to involve the planting of shelter belts throughout the reserve to be maintained, in part, by the students. The traditional Cote people, more than seven decades ago, depended on trees for their livelihood. They produced maple syrup, berry crops and a sustainable lumber industry. The shelter belt proposal is intended to teach the environmental importance of tree planting, with the traditional uses of trees as part of a sustainable community, and further how healthy land is essential to healthy people.

The types of projects that have been envisioned and proposed by the Cote community, and are in the seminal stages of implementation, are essentially part of a new form of education that melds formal education with life skills mentoring based on a conception of health writ large. The fundamental goal of this system of learning is

threefold: to provide the students with the academic and life skills to enable them to be happy and productive citizens; to create a context in which mutual learning takes place across generations (where mentoring is more important than lecturing); and, to create in the students an appreciation for the social and physical environment, especially as it relates their personal health. The Côte people believe that if education can produce these desired results, their children and youth will not be lost to the jeopardy of the urban world, and that if they decide to leave their community, they will have a holistic intelligence that will make them strong people and resilient to the health risks that they currently see in their youth, especially those who have migrated to the city. Their proposal, then, is to make education an intrinsic part of the everyday world in a cultural and spiritual milieu that focuses on a multi-dimensional understanding of healthy people and healthy communities.

## Conclusion

The pressing question that emanates from the foregoing discussions is this: Why would powerful people and groups choose, either deliberately or inadvertently, to stigmatize and control young people, especially young people who live on the margins of the society? Part of the reasoning must be that as the adult world makes moral or judicial judgments about youth, they not only reinforce the notion that adults are productive and youth are not, but they also reinforce class, race, and gender ideologies that suggest that certain youth (e.g., visible minority and Aboriginal youth, poor children and youth, street kids) are less moral and redeemable than others.

Furthermore, we need to put our condemnation of children and youth in an historical context. With respect to the histories of Aboriginal children in residential schools and immigrant children in industrial Canada, Canadian society understood the delinquency and incorrigibility of young people as closely tied to the need for children and youth in the labour market, that the coerced or enforced employment of youth is often tied to the contemporary labour market need for cheap or free labour (Schissel & Wotherspoon, 2003). Côté and Allahar (1994) argued several years ago that young people, in general, are disenfranchised and lacking power, rights, and legitimacy. At the same time, this demographic is crucial to the economic system because it constitutes a cheap source of labour, as well as a massive consumer market. Their sequel to this work (Côté & Allahar, 2006) reinforces their original argument and illustrates that little has changed. Politically and economically speaking, then, those in control have to ensure that young people do not realize the extent to which they are crucial to the survival of the system, and that they do not band together and rebel against the system. To prevent this kind of uprising and maintain the status quo, dominant interests use ideology and subtle ideological control, as Schissel (2006) notes:

The general dispossession of youth is accompanied by popular discourse that demonizes kids as dangerous. . .individual and corporate business interests, through their control of the media, offer portraits of young people as potentially dangerous, violent, and morally bereft (Giroux, 2003a; Glassner, 1999; Schissel, 1997). If the general public views youth

as dangerous and prone to criminality, it is less likely to be sympathetic to the increasingly dire economic situation that today's youth face.

This economic situation is the direct result of cuts to social programs implemented by the federal government at the insistence of business groups who have successfully lobbied against welfare liberalism (see McBride, 2005; Carroll, 2004; Teeple, 2000; Burman, 1996). Further, in marginalizing youth, the state undercuts social programs that target youth in particular. The relationship between poverty levels and youth crime is rarely discussed in media representations of young criminals.

Instead, media images are of youth who are lazy, unwilling to work, and criminally volatile. (p. 139)

Males (1996, 2000) argues, in addition, that the moral and judicial attack on children and youth stems in large part from the needs of the baby boom generation to protect its investments and its pensions. The logic here is that the disenfranchisement of younger generations, either through the labour market or the crime control system, facilitates the democratic dominance of the baby boom generation. Its money is protected through access to cheap labour, to youth consumerism, and through the minimization of social programs that sustain and foster the welfare of young generations. Such social programs put financial pressure on government resources that the boom generation thinks should be directed, by right of its contributions in taxes, to an increasingly large pension-eligible generation. This is a philosophy that forgets that the world does not necessarily or rightfully belong to an adult generation but is instead borrowed from a younger generation.

As we attempt to come to grips with the expanding state control of youth, we need to try to understand whether children and youth are perceived to be and are, in fact, an increasing reserve army of marginalized labour. Now, more than ever, youth are both in demand as consumers and as underpaid labourers. The multinational fast food industry is a typical example of global capitalism that flourishes on the backs of part-time, poorly paid child and youth labourers who receive no labour benefits, have no rights to collective action, and are often exposed to dangerous work. In fact, compared to adults, youth and child work in North America is considerably more dangerous than adult work (Schissel, 2001). The absolute denial of the rights of children and youth in the labour market coincides quite dramatically with the denial of the rights of children and youth to fair and impartial justice, a denial that is embedded in modern day youth justice policy in Canada.

As an antidote to conservative law and order politics, the importance of the kinds of social policies that emanate from research on crime prevention and alternatives to justice cannot be overstated. Saskatoon is typical of many Canadian cities which have tried to deal with issues such as child and youth prostitution through legal avenues. Unfortunately, successes have been few. When children and youth are sexually exploited and assaulted by pimps and adult pedophiles, the law's best purpose is not served through legal apparatus like the former Young Offenders Act or the new Youth Criminal Justice Act. In fact, when the police arrest children and youths for involvement in the sex trade,

they are doubly jeopardizing kids.

Simply put, the law needs to change very fundamentally. The Youth Criminal Justice Act does have progressive, caring dimensions that include provisions for diverting youth from the justice system into community-based, alternatives to a formal justice system which incarcerates. Unfortunately, the “security of the society” framework upon which the act is based could easily become more punitive and more comprehensive than previous incarnations of youth justice in Canada – or nothing could change – especially as neo-liberal societies adamantly oppose increased spending on social justice programs like alternative, community-based programs for young offenders.

I argue in my work that any attempt to change the justice system – for example, to include the legal system in the protection of children and youth – without the involvement of education and a profound understanding of health and marginality is futile. For example, safe houses are important but if they do not provide a context in which street kids can develop a sense of self-worth and competency, and where they can access services to become healthy and secure, they are only temporary places of refuge. Furthermore, if social policies are blind to the epidemic of ill health that characterizes marginalized children and youth – closely tied to issues of race, class, gender, and geography – they are doomed to failure. My research proposes that involvement with the law for children and youth is a profound individual and collective health risk, and that, as a result, the courts are not the places where youth justice can occur. Fundamental justice can arise, however, if we reframe the way that we think about institutions like education, if we constitute schools, for example, as democratic communities that care for the whole person.

## References

Bell, S. (2002a). Girls in trouble. In B. Schissel & C. Brooks (Eds.), *Marginality and condemnation: An introduction to critical criminology in Canada* (pp. 129-152). Halifax, NS: Fernwood.

Bell, S. (2002b). *Young offenders and juvenile justice: A century after the fact*. Scarborough, ON: Thompson Nelson.

Burman, P. (1996). *Poverty's bonds: Power and agency in the social relations of welfare*. Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing.

Carroll, W. (2004). *Corporate power in a globalizing world: A study in elite social organization*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

Côté, J. E., & Allahar, A. L. (1994). *Generation on hold: Coming of age in the late twentieth century*. Toronto: Stoddart.

Côté, J. E., & Allahar, A. L. (2006). *Critical youth studies: A Canadian focus*. Toronto: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Doob, A., & Cesaroni, C. (2004). *Responding to youth crime in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Faith, K. (1993). *Unruly women: The politics of confinement and resistance*. Vancouver, BC: Press Gang Publishers.

Giroux, H. (2003a). *The abandoned generation: Democracy beyond the culture of fear*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Giroux, H. (2003b). Public time and educated hope: Educational leadership and the war against youth. *The Initiative Anthology*. [www.muohio.edu/InitiativeAnthology](http://www.muohio.edu/InitiativeAnthology).

Glassner, B. (1999). *The culture of fear: Why Americans are afraid of the wrong things*. New York: Basic Books.

Green, R. G., & Healy, K. (2003). *Tough on kids: Rethinking approaches to youth justice*. Saskatoon, SK: Purich Publishing.

Hamilton, A. C., & Sinclair, C. M (1991). The justice system and Aboriginal people. *Report of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba* (Chapter VI). Winnipeg, MB: Queen's Printer.

Henry, F., Tator, C., Mattis, W., & Rees, T. (2000). *The colour of democracy: Racism in Canadian society* (2nd ed.). Toronto: Harcourt Brace and Company.

Hogeveen, B., & Smandych, R. (2001). Origins of the newly proposed Canadian Youth Criminal Justice Act: Political discourse and the perceived crisis in youth crime in the 1990s. In R. Smandych (Ed.), *Youth justice: History, legislation and reform* (pp. 144-169). Toronto: Harcourt Brace.

Males, M. (1996). *Scapegoat generation: America's war on adolescents*. Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press.

Males, M. (2000). *Framing youth: 10 myths about the next generation*. Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press.

Mallea, P. (1999). *Getting tough on kids: Young offenders and the "law and order" agenda*. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

McBride, S. (2005). *Paradigm shift: Globalization and the Canadian state*. Halifax, NS: Fernwood.

Newfoundland. (2001). *Youth justice: A community response* [PLIAN 2(4) March]. St. John's: Public Legal Information Association of Newfoundland.

Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). (1996). *Bridging the cultural divide*. Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services.

Saskatchewan Justice. (2004). *Saskatchewan commission on First Nations and Metis people and justice reform*. Regina: Government of Saskatchewan.

Schiraldi, V., & Zeidenberg, J. (1997). *The risks juveniles face when they are incarcerated with adults*. Washington, DC: The Justice Policy Institute.

Schissel, B. (1993). *The social dimensions of Canadian youth justice*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

Schissel, B. (1997). *Youth crime, moral panics, and the politics of hate*. Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing.

Schissel, B. (2001). The pathology of powerlessness: Adolescent health in Canada. In B. S. Bolaria & H. Dickinson (Eds.), *Health, illness, and health care in Canada* (Chapter 16). Toronto: Harcourt Brace and Company, Canada.

Schissel, B. (2002). Youth crime, youth justice and the politics of marginalization. In B. Schissel & C. Brooks (Eds.), *Marginality and condemnation: An introduction to critical criminology in Canada* (pp. 109-127). Halifax, NS: Fernwood.

Schissel, B. (2006). *Still blaming children: Youth conduct and the politics of child hating*. Halifax, NS: Fernwood.

Schissel, B., & Fedec, K. (1999). The selling of innocence: The gestalt of danger in the lives of youth prostitutes. *Canadian Journal of Criminology*, 41(1), 33-56.

Schissel, B., & Wotherspoon, T. (2003). *Education, oppression and emancipation: The legacy of school for Aboriginal people*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

Shaw, M. (2000). Women, violence and disorder in prisons. In K. Hannah-Moffat & M. Shaw (Eds.), *An ideal prison? Critical essays on women's imprisonment in Canada* (pp. 61-70). Halifax, NS: Fernwood.

Teeple, G. (2000). *Globalization and the decline of social welfare into the 21st century*. Aurora, ON: Garamond.

York, G. (1992). *The dispossessed: Life and death in Native Canada*. Toronto: Little, Brown and Company.

## CHAPTER 9

# THE UNTAPPED POTENTIAL IN OUR COMMUNITIES TO ASSIST YOUTH ENGAGED IN RISKY BEHAVIOUR

Susan Reid

**Abstract:** By drawing upon what is known about risk factors and protective factors with respect to at-risk youth, the author discusses how communities can become more actively involved and supportive of young people, and thereby work towards a model where the community actively promotes resilience among children and youth. She provides a detailed review of the research around resilience to support her contention that many resources, already present in communities but largely untapped, have the potential to encourage vulnerable young people to avoid developing an aggressive posture towards others, dropping out of school, drifting into a criminal lifestyle, or being victimized. She notes the growing and consistent evidence that poverty, unemployment, abuse, family and school problems correlate to crime, and argues that while one cannot say with any certainty that these factors are the causes of crime, they certainly are the causes of disadvantage. It is the disadvantaged, she states, who are the “most thoroughly processed” by the criminal justice system.

There have been numerous studies which confirm a range of individual, family, school, and community factors that place children and young people “at risk” of engaging in offending and victimization behaviour (McIntyre, 1993; Waldie & Spreen, 1993; Leone, 1994; Hawkins & Catalano, 1995; Latimer, 2001; Farrington, 2002). Similarly, studies have shown a host of protective factors which help children and adolescents avoid developing aggressive behaviour, dropping out of school, drifting into offending behaviour, or being victimized (Howell, 1995; Olsson, Bond, Burns, Vella-Broderick, & Sawyer, 2003). Attempts have been made to blame crime on everything from diet and violence on television to different skull shapes and sizes. Each of these theories has been limited by the absence of convincing data. There is, however, growing and consistent evidence that poverty, unemployment, abuse, family and school problems correlate to crime. While one cannot say with any certainty that these factors are the causes of crime, they certainly are the causes of disadvantage. The concern lies in the fact that those individuals who are most disadvantaged socially, emotionally, and personally and who lack financial and personal resources are often left behind, and are the people most thoroughly processed by the criminal justice system.

Hawkins (1995) identified a series of multiple risks associated with neighbourhoods and communities, the family, the schools, and peer groups, as well as factors unique to a given individual that increase the probability of violence, health, and behaviour problems

among adolescents and young adults. Further, he identified a series of protective factors that “buffer” young people from the negative consequences of exposure to these risks by either reducing the impact of the risk or changing the way in which a person responds to the risk. Drawing on the work of Rutter (1987), Hawkins (1995) suggested that individual characteristics exemplary of a positive social orientation, positive relationships with family members, teachers or other adults, and healthy beliefs and clear standards about behaviour help to protect young people from the risk of involvement in crime and other related problems. This work was later expanded and utilized in the *Communities that Care* prevention approach, which is a systematic approach that facilitates the delivery of well-coordinated services that reduce risk and increase protection within defined geographical areas (Hawkins, Catalano, & Arthur, 2002; France & Crow, 2005). In an analysis of the effects of the *Communities that Care* approach, Hawkins et al. (2008) have shown that the approach, when implemented with fidelity, has appreciably reduced targeted risk factors for youth in middle school. The “risk factor prevention paradigm” (Farrington, 2000) seeks to identify factors that increase the probability of later anti-social behaviour and intervene to eliminate these risks factors.

The United States Surgeon General’s Report on Youth Violence (2001) suggested that the strongest risk factors during childhood were involvement in serious criminal behaviour, substance use, being male, physical aggression, low family socio-economic status or poverty, and anti-social parents. As children move into adolescence, the peer group tends to supplant the influence of family and the greatest risk factors delineated by the same report were weak ties to conventional peers, involvement in criminal acts, and ties to anti-social or delinquent peers. In identifying these two trajectories for the onset of youth violence, the Surgeon General’s Report suggests that late onset violence prevention is not widely recognized or understood. Moffitt, Caspi, Harrington, and Milne (2002) argue that even after puberty, there is still a need for intervention to prevent late onset offending in the adult years. As shown by Zara and Farrington (2009), there is evidence to suggest that adult onset offending may benefit from intervention in the adolescent years to prevent the occurrence during the young adult years.

Research on adolescent resilience differs from the risk paradigm research through its focus on assets and resources that enable some youth to overcome the negative effects of exposure to risk. This research suggests that despite the presence of numerous risks, resilient individuals have sufficient protective factors in their lives that they do not enter a life of crime and are able to avoid serious delinquency, substance abuse, and other risky behaviours (Smith, Lizotte, Thornberry, & Krohn, 1995; Turner, Hartman, Exum, & Cullen, 2007). In this context, resilience may be seen as, “a dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity” (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000, p. 543).

Other resiliency factors mentioned in the literature deal with an individual’s environment, such as the presence of a support system outside of the family (Fergusson & Lynskey, 1996; Richmond & Beardslee, 1988; Rubin, 1996; Valentine & Feinauer, 1993). Losel and Bliesener (1994) discuss personal and social resources that have previously proven to be protective in different research contexts as the theoretical background for their Bielefeld-Erlangen Study on Resilience. They suggest that the most important protective factors for a youth who has grown up in “multi-problem milieux” are: how

the youth deals with stressors and copes with problems; the cognitive competence of the individual; a flexible personality temperament that favours effective coping strategies in the face of adversity; stable emotional relationships with at least one parent or other reference person; a supportive educational climate and social support from outside the family (Losel & Bliesener, 1994, pp. 756-757). Places where resilient individuals find this external support are many, including at school, perhaps from a teacher or counsellor, at church, and from neighbours, peers, or even the parents of peers.

Bender and Losel (1997) indicate that resilience research provides an opportunity to understand the specific protective mechanisms that underlie successful adaptation to specific risks for specific behavioural outcomes. Fergus and Zimmerman (2005) also point out that adolescents may be resilient in the face of one type of risk but may be unable to overcome other types of risks. This makes it difficult to identify universal protective factors that might be interpreted to operate in the same manner for all groups, all contexts, or all outcomes.

There has been a considerable amount of research on the value of community-based crime prevention for high-risk youth (Farrington, 1997; Schoenwald, Scherer, & Brondino, 1997; Fiester, 1998; Robertson, Grimes, & Rogers, 2001; Borum, 2003; Ronka, Oravala, & Pulkkinen, 2002). In this work, it has been found that youths who form positive bonds with their community are generally less likely to become involved with the juvenile justice system so that the development of such programs is based on the value of creating an environment where youths can form or enhance positive attachments to their communities.

Shaw (2001) suggests the best way to plan for healthy communities is to ensure the inclusion and support of young people and their families. In determining appropriate prevention programs for 12- to 18-year-old youth, Shaw (2001) has recommended that in addition to universal programs for all young people, there are three additional targeted subgroups worthy of careful prevention programming: youth at risk, with a particular emphasis on those living in poor areas and those with multiple risk factors; youth in care; and youth coming out of the justice system. As Whyte (2004) has pointed out, studies over many years have shown that the “vast majority” of young people who have come to the attention of the formal youth justice system are “poor and disadvantaged”. Further, one must be cognizant of the fact that the profile of both the typical offender and the typical victim of crime share many similarities with regard to age and background. In an earlier study, Whyte (2003) found that 46% of a cohort of persistent young offenders had been accommodated in “public care” at some time in their lives due to abuse or neglect. As a positive outcome for these adverse situations, a number of youth were nonetheless able to become resilient to their negative life situation.

This chapter will focus on ways in which the community can become more actively involved and supportive of young people by bringing together what is known about risk factors and protective factors to offer youth who engage in “risky” behaviour an opportunity for resilience. Werner and Smith (1992) suggest that the resilient child is one “who loves well, works well, plays well and expects well” (p. 192). The suggestions that are offered in this chapter work toward a community-based model where the community actively engages in the promotion of resilience among children and youth. Hagell (2007)

has suggested that it is not feasible to expect resilience to develop among young people who may have had lifelong experiences of adversity unless their communities are willing to support them. Krovetz (1999) suggested that resiliency theory should be the basis on which all our community efforts are founded: "When a community works together to foster resiliency, a large number of our youth can overcome great adversity and achieve bright futures" (p. 121).

## Protection for Children from Home and School

It has been pointed out in the academic literature that youth who have been repeatedly victimized or witnessed violence against someone that they care about are more likely to be offenders as they grow up. Longitudinal research analyzing developmental pathways toward violence and youthful offending have found that youth are more likely to develop a delinquent career if they have parents who are abusive with each other (Baldry, 2003). The National Crime Prevention Council (Government of Canada, 1997) suggested that prevention strategies that address these root causes of crime by supporting families and keeping children safe would help prevent the cycle of violence. They underscored the importance of such prevention activities by stating that prevention programs which support children and families will lead to "meaningful reductions" in human suffering and loss, individual victimization and levels of fear in our communities, and money spent on police, courts, and custody facilities for young offenders. Research suggests that early intervention targeted at socially and economically disadvantaged youth can reduce the likelihood of long-term criminal activity.

Bolger and Patterson (2001) found that chronic maltreatment (abuse, neglect, or both) is associated with heightened levels of aggressive behaviour and repeated peer rejection during childhood and early adolescence. Utilizing the data from the Canadian National Longitudinal Survey on Children and Youth, Dauvergne and Johnson (2001) point out that children who witnessed family violence were nearly three times more likely to be involved in physical aggression at school and twice as likely to be involved in indirect aggression (i.e., excluding others, spreading gossip, etc.) than their peers who did not experience family violence. An earlier study (Schwartz, Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 1997) found that children who were bullied by their peers and showed aggressive tendencies had experienced more punitive, aggressive, and hostile treatment within their families. Patterson (1995) has observed that parents who use extremely harsh parenting styles or parents who are neglectful of their children are at high risk for having children who will be aggressive and coercive in interactions with others. Baldry (2003) reports that exposure to violence between parents is positively correlated with bullying and victimization in school, even after controlling for direct child abuse. In a later study, she found that where children were exposed to both inter-parental violence and abuse by their parents, there was a significantly higher rate of the children's reporting of animal abuse (Baldry, 2005b). Chronically maltreated children are likely to have had few opportunities to experience and observe empathy and responsiveness in their interactions with parents (Zahn-Waxler & Smith, 1992). This lack of knowledge is likely to impede their ability to develop pro-social skills such as helping, sharing, and cooperation. In other words, both abuse and neglect are likely to contribute to children's propensity to use coercive and aggressive behaviours in their own interactions with others, which may

in turn also contribute to children becoming disliked and rejected by peers.

In a study of individuals who had managed to transcend the cycle of violence and grew up to be non-abusive adults despite a home life that was replete with episodes of family violence, it was found that the presence of other adults and a support system outside of the family that would not stand for the violence they witnessed was one of the key factors to their success (Harris & Dersch, 2001). These subjects felt that having access to environments that did not support the use of violence such as their school, neighbourhood, or a friend's home was essential in the prevention of intergenerational violence. Rubin (1996) suggested that resilient individuals have an ability to not only attract others but to use what people can give them and, thus, other people become mentors to the individual. The study by Harris and Dersch (2001) looking at adults who had been exposed to domestic violence and violent homes yet were not currently abusive or violent themselves, found that these adult survivors frequently referred to mentors who helped them cope with the violence in their families of origin. This underscores the importance of helping children who are in violent homes connect with adults who can offer support, guidance, and caring.

Patterson (1995) argues that it is essential that parents encourage pro-social behaviour in children, while discouraging coercive behaviour through effective, non-physical discipline. While some families may continue to be dysfunctional, it has been shown that exposure to alternative forms of caring can break the cycle of intergenerational violence. The Search Institute, as cited in Benson (2006), has shown in their longitudinal research that having three or more positive, non-parent adult relationships can have a significant impact on problems experienced by young people in their relationships. It seems that if we were able to actively involve other parents from our communities to share and model their non-physical forms of discipline and alternative methods of talking to children, we may be preventing future generations of violent episodes. This could become a project that would involve the wider community through the school and recreational programs. It seems that some children never experience another "parent" disciplining children in a way that is non-coercive and the use of parent role models as integral features of programs already being offered could provide some assistance in offsetting the negative risk factors inherent in children who experience child abuse and neglect. Barbara Coloroso (2002) has promoted the concept of involved parenting as a form of additional supervision and guidance to children at schools in order to prevent school bullying.

In a study which looked at deviance and other problem behaviour of a group of children who were involved in bullying at the age of 8 years, and a group of children who were involved in bullying at the age of 12 years, it was found that involvement in bullying is not a transient problem. Rather, psychiatric problems surface at the time of the bullying and continue for many years after. It was found that children who were involved in bullying at the age of 8 years and displayed deviance on psychiatric tests were five times more likely to display deviance at school at the age of 15 years. This propensity is dramatically increased as the age of onset increases to age 12, with those children experiencing bullying and displaying deviance being nearly 40 times more likely to be deviant at age 15. Further, this study found that children who are "bully-victims" at early ages not only have the most concurrent psychiatric symptoms compared to

other children, but also have more psychiatric symptoms later in life (Kumpulainen & Rasanen, 2000).

Other research has pointed to the fact that bullies have been found to have more criminal convictions later in life, and they are also more likely to be involved in serious and recidivist crime (Olweus, 1993; Whitney & Smith, 1993). Hugh-Jones and Smith (1999) pointed out that victims of bullying have internalizing problems, relationship difficulties, health problems, and other adjustment difficulties even on into adulthood. Coloroso (2002) suggests that, “Kids can’t stop the bullying they experience or witness all by themselves. They need adults at home, in the school and in community programs committed to breaking this cycle of violence wherever they see it and whenever they hear about it”, and further states that, “one of the most effective strategies to make a school safe is the physical presence of responsible adults” (p. 180).

While having strong and supportive adults in the environment is essential, it is important that those adults are apprised of the importance of understanding the bully and bully-victim phenomenon. Research has shown that few children are exclusively bullies and most have experienced both roles in one way or another, at one time or another in their lives (Nansel et al., 2001). Children who participate in bullying can be “assistants” who physically help the bully; “reinforcers” who incite the bully; inactive “outsiders” who pretend not to see what is happening; and “defenders” who help the victim by confronting the bully (Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Bjorkqvist, Osterman, & Kaukiainen, 1996). “Bully bystanders” report feeling bad, “uncomfortable”, and “ashamed” when they see someone get the brunt of verbal or physical bullying and these feelings are exemplified if the bullying goes unchallenged by those in authority on whom the children count for protection (Harachi, Catalano, & Hawkins, 1999; Coloroso, 2002). Baldry (2005a) found that boys were more likely to ignore the bullying taking place than girls, and she argues that ignoring is an indirect way of supporting the bullying. In another study, she found “same gender identification” led to victims of a different gender from the observers being seen as more blameworthy than victims of the same gender. This was true for both boys and girls (Baldry, 2004). Previous victimization did not place bystanders in a positive position to intervene in subsequent bullying episodes. However, Baldry (2005a) did find that students who had been previously victimized were more likely to seek the assistance of an adult teacher than those who were non-victims. She draws attention to the fact that while we may be desirous that children report bullying episodes, we must be careful not to require these because “even if students themselves do not bully, this does not mean that they are willing (or capable) to stop it” (p. 35).

It is important to recognize that in order to implement “safe school” policies, it is not good enough to simply have caring and supportive adults present. The literature on school climate has shown that it is essential that the students, teachers, parents, and administrators have a sense of connectedness to the school (Sprott, 2004; D. C. Gottfredson & G. D. Gottfredson, 2002; Fein et al., 2002). The establishment of trust and connectedness to an adult in the school setting maximizes the chance that students will confide in them if a problem arises, either for themselves or if they hear that a student plans to harm others. Further, in the decision to integrate new programs into a school setting, it is not only important to consider the impact that the program would

have on daily operations within the school, but to also build on the concept that the “new” initiative serves a larger purpose for the school (Gendreau, Goggin, & Smith, 1999; Fagan & Mihalic, 2003).

If we are truly committed to creating a community that supports resilient youth, then it will be necessary to tap into the strengths and assets that individual community members possess. Garbarino and deLara (2002) indicate that while parental presence in the school is welcomed in the elementary grades, by the time children graduate to middle school, a parent’s presence may no longer be welcome: “A clear message from the middle school was either that help was not wanted in the upper-grade classes, or that the school felt parents were not competent helpers past the elementary school level” (p. 51). They go on to suggest that parents should offer to volunteer their time in school in “new ways” and recommend that parents be creative about what they can offer the schools along the lines of additional supervision or security of the environment. Coloroso (2002, p. 181) echoes this concern suggesting that few if any programs have been developed for middle school and high school related to the prevention of bullying. She strongly recommends that parents be involved in helping to create a school climate that supports creative, constructive, and responsible activities that work towards reducing all forms of violence.

Lyznicki, McCaffree, and Robinowitz (2004) of the American Medical Association, suggest that family physicians have an important role to play in advocating for bullying prevention in their communities. They argue that as consultants to schools, police departments, and community groups, physicians can educate other adults about the importance of community environments that “value caring, respect, and diversity”. Further, physicians also have a role to play in identifying at-risk patients and counselling families about the problem. To this end, they prepared a handout on school bullying that has been made available to doctors for their patients.

## **Extending our Prevention Programs for Youth to the Community of Older Adults**

It is compelling to note that young people (ages 15 to 24) not only commit the most crime, but they also have a personal victimization rate over twice the national average (Shaffer & Ruback, 2002). Conversely, people over the age of 65 have a personal victimization rate too low to make a statistically reliable estimate (Jakobsson, 2005). One reason for the low rate of victimization among older adults may be that older adults expose themselves less to potentially dangerous situations. It is not clear whether this is due to age, illness, or other factors associated with aging, or whether this is due to fear of crime. If there is a direct link between age, victimization, and the fear of crime, it has not been well researched. The aging process for many people means a slowing down of their activities and elicits fears because of greater personal vulnerability to accidents, illness, solitude, and poverty. However, we do not know to what extent the fear of crime is due to the aging process in restricting the activities of the elderly and consequently reducing the probability of their becoming victims (Brillon, 1987).

In an analysis of adolescent fear of crime, May and Dunaway (2000) conclude that factors that affect adult fear of crime are similarly important for adolescent fear, namely neighbourhood incivility and perceived risk. In particular, those who are regularly

exposed to the threat of criminal victimization suffer a heightened level of fear of crime. As has been pointed out, many young people do not feel safe in their schools and feel even more vulnerable on their way to and from school (Astor, Meyer, & Behre, 1999). Even those young people, who have already been adjudicated by the youth criminal justice system, still indicate that they are afraid of becoming a victim of a criminal offence (Lane, 2006). In looking at the fear of crime research, it has been found that people who live in areas with a lot of disorder, decline, and crime report higher levels of fear than those living in other areas (Taylor, 2001). Ditton, Chadee, Farral, Gilchrist, and Bannister (2004) found that with older adults, those who lived in semi high-rise buildings designed for elderly persons and who also watched television news reported a higher fear of crime.

Hagestad (1998), in her keynote address to the United Nations to begin the Year of Older Persons, commented on the importance of moving toward a society for all ages. In an attempt to create such a society there is a need to fight age segregation, she argues, given that in many industrialized societies the old and the young spend much of their time in “age-segregated enclaves”. Residential patterns, activities, and institutions such as schools and institutions for the elderly lead to further segregation. Stereotypes flourish under conditions of inadequate contact and are reinforced through the segregation of youth and the elderly. She discusses the importance of maintaining conversations: “When the old are not allowed to tell their story, the young grow up without history. If the young are not listened to, we have no future”.

In an attempt to break down barriers between youth and older adults, it seems that one method of creating a greater awareness of each “age segregated enclave” is to work on creative ways to bring seniors and youth together. If, as has been pointed out earlier, youth gain resilience when they have caring and supportive relationships with another adult, then it seems that a caring and supportive older adult could be the untapped community resource for many “youth at risk”. With the changes to our modern lifestyles, it is rare to have access to an extended family and older adults may provide a “pseudo family” to young people who live in chaotic and non-nurturing families. Fergusson and Lynskey (1996) talk about the isolation that many children and youth from abusive families experience. It may also serve the interests of older adults who are isolated from their grandchildren and who have much to offer young people in terms of mentorship, guidance, and the mutual caring and support exemplified in the literature on resiliency. In a qualitative study of youth and older adults, de Souza (2003) reports that the youth in her study believed that contact with older adults could prevent violent behaviour and drug abuse among young people. Similarly, the elders indicated that they could provide affection ties that would encourage trust, reciprocity, and autonomy for children and youth from disrupted families.

As we move into the years ahead, it is essential that we consider the demographic distribution of our population. Youth currently comprise over one billion people on the planet and account for approximately 20% of the world population, while just over 10% of the world population consists of seniors over the age of 65 years. It has been predicted that the current ratio of youth outnumbering older people (1.5:1) will be dramatically altered over the next 50 years, and that by the year 2050 older people will outnumber

youth (1.8:1). From 1980 to 1990, the growth rate of those in the age range of 15 to 24 years was the highest growth rate of any other age cohort and constitutes the largest generation of youth in history. However, this youthful generation will decline as the growth rate of those 60 or older will reach 2.8% annually between 2025 and 2030 (United Nations, 2001). Before 2050, the number of those over 60 will surpass those under 15 for the first time in history. Over the next half century, the median age of the population is projected to reach the age of 47 in the more developed regions of the world. These projections show a dramatic change in the two ends of the lifespan, yet very little has been put in place to deal with the competing demands and requests for services for both youth and seniors.

Berg (2001) suggests that the key issue in bringing the generations together is the perception that the “generation in the middle” might believe that both youth and the elderly are liabilities and not assets to society. He goes on to suggest that for youth this bias might be called “adultism” as those in the middle generation think only those in the middle can have responsible attitudes. To the elderly, the bias might be called “reverse paternalism” in which the elderly are held to be incapable and needing treatment like the very young. Both youth and the elderly may be ill-equipped to be change agents and may encounter severe resistance with the “generation in the middle”. However, the youth and the elderly might find common cause on issues surrounding the generation in the middle and this may make the relationship more plausible for each end of the aging continuum. Braithwaite (2002) advocates for the creation of spaces within the community where young, middle-aged, and older people can get to know each other in order to “build mutual respect, develop cooperative relationships and reignite the norm of human-heartedness” (p. 323).

In any attempt to intervene in the lives of young people, it is essential to reinforce the natural social bonds between young and old, siblings, friends, and others. As Werner and Smith (2001) suggest, these natural social bonds give meaning to one’s life and a reason for commitment and caring. If we look at the work done on resilient families, we find that family protective factors assist individuals in the face of adversity. Key characteristics of resilient families include commitment and emotional support for one another. McCubbin, Patterson, and Thompson (1983) suggest that if parents are not able to provide a warm, affectionate, and cohesive environment, then other kin such as grandparents may step in to provide it. In the literature on intergenerational programming, dramatic results have been achieved in changing attitudes toward the elderly from a diverse group of young people engaged in such programs (Wrenn, Merdinger, Parry, & Miller, 1991; Barton, 1999; Couper, Sheehan, & Thomas, 1991; Bullock & Osborne, 1999; Larkin & Newman, 1997; Ward, 1997; Kuehne, 2003; Meshel & McGlynn, 2004). However, as Hagestad and Uhlenberg (2005) caution:

such intergenerational programs must ensure sustained contact, be of sufficient duration to allow for shared identity, perspective-taking and mutual socialization...to have school children sing carols in the old people’s home at Christmas time or inviting an old person for one session at the local school to talk about World War II will not do the job of forging personal knowledge and viable ties. (p. 357)

Glass et al. (2004) in their evaluation of an intergenerational program, which was designed to harness the generative potential of senior volunteers to enhance social capital in the community at large, argue that social capital allows for effective collective action “through patterns of pre-existing social relationships characterized by mutual trust, a willingness to provide aid and support, and norms of reciprocity and mutual interdependence” (p. 97). The program was successful primarily due to the community’s ability to find a critical mass of volunteers that could provide a consistent and substantial commitment of time.

While intergenerational programs in the community may not provide a panacea for all of the problems facing youth at risk, it is important to recognize that social context is an important component of success in intervention programs. Farrall (2002) suggests that social circumstances and relationships are the “medium through which change can be achieved” (p. 21).

In an attempt to understand some of the dynamics that would need to be taken into consideration, interviews were conducted with 50 seniors and 50 youth about the potential problems envisioned in attempting to bring together youth at risk and older adults. While these comments reflect concerns that might need to be addressed in designing an intergenerational program for youth and seniors, it is equally important to consider such issues during the actual implementation of such an initiative. In the interviews that were conducted to draw out issues that might come to the fore for young offenders involved in an intergenerational program, the at-risk youth gave the following comments:

- Youth might not find it interesting, or a waste of time.
- There may not be a commonality between the two groups, an inability to bond.
- Youth might wonder how it would help them: “Will I be expected to talk about my problems?” “Am I being babysat?”
- “Why should I trust the program?” “What will the older adults tell?” (Privacy issues)
- Youth may feel that they were forced into the situation.
- Youth might get attached to the senior and then the senior passes away.
- Youth may fear being judged or rejected by the older adult: “Are they trying to change me?” “Will I be treated like a criminal?” “Will they look down on me?”
- Youth might think seniors are afraid of them.
- Youth need the older adult to be a friend and not an authority figure.
- Will the seniors even try to understand the youth?
- Young people may not have respect for the older adults.

Looking at the responses of the older adults that were interviewed, the following are issues that they identified that might be a problem from the point of view of the young offenders:

- It might be too “uncool” for a youth to be involved with a senior.

- Youth may fear that they will be rejected or judged by the older adults.
- Youth may think that older adults will tell them things that are outdated or old-fashioned.
- Youth may feel that they don't need help so they won't be receptive to the program.
- Youth may feel that the seniors won't be able to hear them (hearing impairment).
- Youth may be concerned about the rules of the program and whether or not the seniors will be disciplining them.
- Concern by youth that the guidance that they are receiving from the older adults is legitimate.
- Youth may be matched up with an older adult that doesn't suit his or her needs.
- Youth may feel that there is nothing in common: "Will their childhood be comparable to mine?"

## Involving "High-Risk" Youth in Prevention Programs

As outlined by Harper and Carver (1999), involving youth at high risk for negative health outcomes in prevention education programs has presented a challenge, which may be due to the sometimes unpredictable and unconventional behaviours in which adolescents engage. Irwin and Millstein (1992) suggest that progression through the developmental stage of adolescence is marked by exploration with diverse occupational, sexual, and ideological roles in an attempt to establish a mature personal identity and subsequent participation in a range of risk behaviours. Peer perceptions and relationships also become paramount during adolescence as youth struggle to achieve autonomy and independence from parental figures. This developmental pathway is further complicated by specific life circumstances, such as displacement from home through child protection intervention, substance use, school problems, abuse, and a myriad of other social and psychological threats.

In considering what youth need in order to be supported on their journey through adolescence, research has shown that young people need peer support, family and significant other relationships, a sense of belonging to a community that cares, the development of coping skills, and strategies to get ahead in the job market or education sectors. Building on this sense of belonging and community connection, young people can find mutually caring and respectful relationships that will ultimately lead to opportunities for their meaningful involvement. McLaughlin, Irby, and Langman (1994), in citing the commentary of an ex-gang member, stress that young people can "walk around trouble, if there is some place to walk to, and someone to walk with" (p. 324).

The resiliency research literature has pointed out the need to provide interventions with young people exposed to risk that focus on developing their assets and resources (Luthar et al., 2000). Assets for an individual that may be particularly critical to develop, according to Fergus and Zimmerman (2005, p. 411), are social skills for relating

to peers, self-efficacy for health-promoting behaviour, academic skills, and participation in extracurricular and community activities.

Peer helping equips young people (as well as others) with basic skills to offer caring, support, and guidance (Roehlkepartain, 1996). Peer leaders offer several benefits including an enhanced ability to model appropriate behaviours outside the classroom and greater social credibility among students (Doi & DiLorenzo, 1993; Katz, Robisch, & Telch, 1989). Those young people who benefit most from peer education, according to Dryfoos (1990), are the peer educators themselves, possibly because they receive more intensive exposure to the issues than the people they serve.

With well-defined training, peer helpers can learn lifelong skills. Once peer helpers learn to teach and model positive health behaviours, they may continue beyond the program and generalize what they learned to new situations (Finn, 1981). Research has shown that peer programs modified youth's self-reported attitudes about violent behaviour, improved school discipline, and reduced absenteeism (Powell, Muir-McClain, & Halasyamani, 1996; Tindall, 1995). Through peer interactions, individuals learn critical social skills such as impulse control, communication, creative and critical thinking, and relationship or friendship skills (Kellam, Sheppard, Brown, & Fleming, 1982; Benson, Galbraith, & Espeland, 1998). The Search Institute indicated that youth who engaged in projects and programs to help others on a weekly basis were less likely to report at-risk behaviours (Benson, 1990).

## **Peer Helping Programs for Youth "At Risk"?**

Recruiting youth for peer programs often relies on the quality of the relationship that exists between youth in school and their peer program leader. Recruiting outside of schools requires peer program leaders to establish and demonstrate trust building and relationship enhancing qualities to attract experienced "risky" youth (Carr, 1998; Shiner, 1999). Too often, peer helpers in school-based programs are trained in a way that does not prepare them to engage in outreach work or to specifically make connections with youth-serving agencies outside of the school. Further, youth out of the mainstream may have had negative experiences with classroom-based learning and are likely to find themselves alienated from such an approach.

School-based peer training programs are often driven by subject matter, focusing on teaching peer helpers various facts and information they can share with others. Youth at risk often have a wider range of experiences, many of which will have to be addressed prior to or during the subject matter discussion. This means that the trainer must be able to personalize the content, insure that the training process is relevant to the experience of the peer helpers, and adjust the content to match the needs of the peer helpers. In the past this has meant that peer helping programs have excluded youth engaged in risky behaviour.

Caputo, Weiler, and Green (1997) found four key factors that were important in contributing to the success of peer helper programs for marginalized youth. First, any initiatives that are developed for youth should address both short-term and long-term needs of the young people who are the consumers of the service. It is important to

recognize that continuity and dependability may be extremely difficult for some street youth or other young people currently leading a chaotic life. It is essential that the peer helpers be well versed on the importance of confidentiality in dealing with their clients. Further, in dealing with youth as consumers of a peer helping program, it is essential that the leaders are supported for their work. Second, programs must be socially and culturally relevant as well as accessible. Third, there must be the provision of ongoing agency leadership, support, and the necessary structure while maintaining the degree of flexibility required to meet the varying and changing needs of the clients. Staff should be involved in ongoing, consistent follow-up with peer helpers to ensure that peer helpers are given the necessary support. Fourth, it is important to educate the community about these young people to help dispel negative stereotypes and help the community gain a better understanding about who these young people are and their real needs. Misunderstandings and misconceptions can be dealt with through the establishment of a network of support in the broader community.

Prevention programs that have been primarily delivered by peers in the past have not been well researched and of those that have been studied, there was no evidence that programs with peer leaders led to better outcomes than programs of similar content led by adults (Ellickson & Bell, 1990; Tobler, 1992). However, more recent research using meta-analysis by Gottfredson and Wilson (2003) found that programs that involved peers alone were most effective. This was due to the statistical interaction between teacher and peer involvement, suggesting that the benefits that accrue to peer delivery of a program may disappear when the teacher shares the delivery role with the peer.

It is also important to distinguish between what is meant by a peer helping program and those programs that group all high-risk youth together in one classroom with a classroom teacher. It has been found in the evaluation of such programs for at-risk youth that there are unintended harmful iatrogenic effects from this practice. Rather than seeing positive outcomes as a result of such programs, there has been some evidence of an escalation of aggressive and anti-social problem behaviours (Capaldi, Dishion, Stoolmiller, & Yoerger, 2001; Dishion, Eddy, Haas, Li, & Spracklen, 1997; Cho, Hallfros, & Sanchez, 2005). While well intentioned in their design, such programs seem to further alienate the youth that they target and rather than enhancing life skills, school connectedness, and positive peer associations, the research has shown that they seem to make the situation worse. This may be because the youth are further alienated and categorized as outcasts from a system that has already labelled them as deviant.

## Practical Application of Peer Helping with Youth at Risk

A project, *Peer Helpers for Youth In Conflict with the Law: A Training Resource Development Project*, was developed within the nature and scope of the mission and mandate of the National Youth In Care Network (NYICN) which exists to assist marginalized youth, youth in state care, and youth in conflict with the law to find their voices and regain control over their lives through support, skill building, and healing opportunities.

At a Youth Roundtable of the Community Partnership Symposium on Youth Justice Renewal, hosted by the Youth Justice Policy Section of the Department of Justice,

Canada, one of the six recommendations made by youth to help policy-makers, service providers, and politicians make decisions that will have a more positive effect on youth crime in Canada was, “to support youth helping youth initiatives” (Hodgson, 2000).

In 1997 a project sponsored by Health Canada as part of Canada’s Drug Strategy explored peer helping programs for marginalized youth, with a particular focus on street-involved youth (Caputo et al., 1997). In this work, the term “peer helper” was used as an “umbrella term that covered a range of programs in which young people provide service to other young people”. Further, Caputo et al. (1997) suggested that the work that peer helpers do includes “providing various kinds of personal support such as informal advice, mediation, tutoring, employment and life skills, and information on issues such as public health and personal safety” (p. 8). This analysis provided a compendium of street-related peer helping programs but did not go far enough in terms of other categories of marginalized youth, youth in conflict with the law, or youth in state care.

In the first phase of the project, *Peer Helpers for Youth In Conflict with the Law: A Training Resource Development Project*, a “youth” researcher from the National Youth In Care Network and an “adult” researcher from the Centre for Research on Youth at Risk at St. Thomas University were contracted to explore the concept of peer helping and examine existing models, programs, and theories. This collaborative team facilitated a National Roundtable of experts (youth and adults) to consult on the various findings of the literature and to consider the most appropriate themes and targets for a peer helper resource for marginalized youth, youth in conflict with the law, and/or youth in state care. The work of the experts at the National Roundtable further refined the essential peer helping competencies leading to a set of key principles upon which to base the peer helping curriculum. These principles were: unconditional value, respect, compassion, understanding, confidence, problem solving, being at peace with self, mentorship, and encouragement. The peer helping curriculum was developed by the Centre for Research on Youth at Risk (1998) based on these principles. The curriculum included a number of activities that focused on cognitive behaviour skills for the peer and the peer helper to work on collaboratively. These skills included building self-esteem, decreasing anxiety, communicating effectively, developing relationships with others, and asserting and advocating their rights. A train-the-trainer event for youth across Canada working on or establishing peer helping programs for youth in conflict with the law was hosted at St. Thomas University by the Centre for Research on Youth at Risk from June 6 to 9, 2001.

Youth from the National Youth in Care Network are now using this peer helper training curriculum in their local communities to train others to be peer helpers with marginalized youth throughout Canada. The life skills training curriculum combines the research effectiveness of life skills training (Botvin & Griffin, 2005) with a delivery or implementation strategy that is likely to enhance success with hard to reach young people. This program has shown the importance of tapping into members of our community that may have been marginalized at one point in their lives but are now able to connect with other young people, who in turn can use their knowledge and expertise in advocating for themselves and transitioning not only out of the system of state care but also into the wider community. In Hoffman’s (2004) study of young people who were impacted by violence, she found that peer assisted violence termination was an area that had received very little research attention in the past. For the young people in her

study, participation in social action as part of their recovery from trauma and making the decision to desist from their involvement with a violent lifestyle, shows the value of including youth in this process and is an area that has implications for both research and prevention programs in the future.

Research on recidivism has found that the first several months after release from custody is the period in which there is the highest amount of recidivism. If programs can be designed to promote successful community re-entry with follow-up in a transitional community-based program, there should be a substantial reduction of recidivism and enhanced success. In order to consider what the most appropriate community transitional program may be, it is essential that the strengths and assets of the community be considered. It seems that utilizing the talents and skills of former young offenders as peer helpers in such a transitional program for youth coming out of young offender facilities not only promotes successful community re-entry, thereby potentially reducing recidivism, but also assists the peer helper to further his or her quest for resiliency in a supportive community environment.

## Conclusion

Programs aimed at preventing crime have proven most successful when community members come together around a common cause to work at solving problems in their own environment. When programs are designed with the community as a partner, individuals are less likely to feel isolated, respect is developed for other members of the community and their property, and the spirit of the community is enhanced, giving each member a sense of belonging.

We should be careful not to suggest that a program has not been successful if a young person reoffends. While rehabilitative programs are designed with a goal of reducing recidivism, it is essential that other forms of program success are included in the mix and not to totally rely on measures of recidivism to determine success. For most young people, the offending behaviour is part of growing up, of testing the limits, of taking risks, of asserting their independence. It may also be an indication of boredom and the absence of anything useful or meaningful to do. It may be a reflection of that awkward stage of life where one feels grown up but not able to participate fully in the world of adults. Generally, the offences that they commit are relatively minor and decrease in frequency as they grow older, mature, and find a way to participate in and contribute to society.

We can reduce occasional or temporary offending by young people by helping them deal with the stress associated with the turbulence of adolescence and by finding ways of involving them in useful and meaningful activities. Educational and recreational activities to which all have equal access and which are designed on the basis of the varied needs and interests of young people are important. Access to social services can help some young people and their families deal with problems which may underlie the offending behaviour. Given what we know about the correlation between poverty, mental health, and opportunities, the economic security of young people and their families should also be a priority. These measures are all primary prevention strategies – ways of creating healthier and ultimately safer communities for all.

Hoffman (2004) interviewed young people who had been involved in violence throughout most of their lives. When these youth were asked about prevention, they noted that there were many “partial, poorly supported true prevention efforts” which tended to be built around the “tireless efforts... of a charismatic provider” (p. 223). What was most telling in the young people’s responses was their insistence that the only programs that were of value were ones structured like the Boys and Girls Clubs or Big Brothers and Big Sisters Programs which “do not give up on youth” and, as Hoffman describes, have the longevity of the neighbourhood as a key component. With this being said, one of the policies that was recommended by young people in Hoffman’s study was to “glorify youth workers not movie stars and celebrities” in order to bring about cultural change in policies which affect youth in today’s society.

Mihalic and Irwin (2003) suggest that while there has been a proliferation of “best practice” programs or models for reducing crime, delinquency, and other problem behaviours, very little research has considered the importance of how the programs were implemented. Dubois, Holloway, Valentine, and Cooper (2002) in their meta-analysis of mentoring programs for youth found that those programs which had ongoing monitoring of their implementation were much more successful than those that did not receive such scrutiny. The programs discussed throughout this chapter lend themselves well to ongoing evaluation of the implementation process.

G. L. Bowen, Richman, and N. K. Bowen (2000) suggest that factors in the community itself affect resilience through several key community strengths. Communities that have numerous opportunities for participation in community life allow youth an opportunity to learn important skills such as teamwork, group pride, or leadership. Blyth and Roelkepartian (1993) suggest that a strong community should provide avenues to contribute to the welfare of others that can foster an individual’s sense of self-esteem and inner strength. Having opportunities to connect with peers and other adults strengthens opportunities for youth to access a role model, a “friend” or a confidant. The examples of practical application through parent modelling in the schools to prevent bullying and offer alternative forms of communication with children, the intergenerational programming efforts between youth and older adults, and the peer helping curriculum designed for youth in care or custody reflect the importance of a strong community involvement. These suggestions are not “extraordinary” ideas, but may reflect the power of the ordinary as suggested by Benard (2004):

What began as a quest to understand the extraordinary has revealed the power of the ordinary. Resilience does not come from rare and special qualities, but from the everyday magic of ordinary, normative human resources in the minds, brains and bodies of children, in their families and relationships, and in their communities. (p. iv)

Seccombe (2002) suggests that it is essential that as a society we gain a broader, systemic view of resiliency. Based on the work of Waller (2001), she argues that risk factors as well as protective factors are cumulative and linked in risk chains. This perspective moves beyond a blaming approach to one that considers the ecological, cultural, and developmental nuances of situations in which people find themselves. As Walsh (1998, p. 12) cautions, it is essential that the concept of resilience not be used in

public policy to withhold social support based on a rationale that success or failure is determined by strengths or deficits within individuals and their families. Benard (1991) had warned about this very approach in suggesting that when we create communities, we must be mindful that we show respect and care for youth as individuals so that we work towards building a critical mass of future citizens who will “rescind the mean-spirited, greed-based, control-driven social policies we now have and recreate a social covenant grounded in social and economic justice” (p. 105). In more recent years, she has called for the transformation of all our youth and human services systems through a fundamental change in relationships, beliefs, and power opportunities so that there is a new focus on “human capacities and gifts” as opposed to our present focus on “challenges and problems” (Benard, 2004, p. 10).

In working with the “untapped potential” in all of our communities by providing a safe haven for young and old alike, we are taking a step towards a community that may reflect a covenant based on social justice. This would be a resilient community

## References

Astor, R. A., Meyer, H. A., & Behre, W. J. (1999). Unowned places and times: Maps and interviews about violence in high schools. *American Educational Research Journal*, 36(1), 3-42.

Baldry, A. C. (2003). Bullying in schools and exposure to domestic violence. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 27(7), 713-732.

Baldry, A. C. (2004). What about bullying? An experimental field study to understand students' attitudes towards bullying and victimisation in Italian middle schools. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 74, 583-598.

Baldry, A. C. (2005a). Bystander behaviour among Italian students. *Pastoral Care, June*, 30-35.

Baldry, A. C. (2005b). Animal abuse, bullying and family violence. *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health*, 15(2), 97-110.

Barton, H. (1999). Effects of an intergenerational program on the attitudes of emotionally disturbed youth toward the elderly. *Educational Gerontologist*, 25(7), 623-641.

Benard, B. (1991). *Fostering resiliency in kids: Protective factors in the family, school, and community*. Portland, OR: Western Center for Drug-Free Schools and Communities.

Benard, B. (2004). *Resiliency: What we have learned*. San Francisco: WestEd.

Bender, D., & Losel, F. (1997). Protective and risk effects of peer relations and social support on antisocial behavior in adolescents from multi-problem milieus. *Journal of Adolescence*, 20(6), 661-678.

Benson, P. (1990). *The troubled journey: A portrait of 6th-12th grade youth*. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute.

Benson, P. (2006). *All kids are our kids: What communities must do to raise caring and responsible children and adolescents* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Benson, P. L., Galbraith, J., & Espeland, P. (1998). *What teens need to succeed*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit.

Berg, R. J. (2001). *The Global Meeting of Generations: Development as if all generations mattered*. From the Global Meeting of Generations Website (International Development Conference). Retrieved from <http://gmg.idc.org/gmg/resources/papers/YouthPaper.asp>

Blyth, D. A., & Roelkepartian, E. C. (1993). *Healthy communities, healthy youth*. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute.

Bolger, K. E., & Patterson, C. J. (2001). Developmental pathways from child maltreatment to peer rejection. *Child Development*, 72(2), 549-568.

Borum, R. (2003). Managing at-risk juvenile offenders in the community: Putting evidence-based principles into practice. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 19(1), 114-137.

Botvin, G. J., & Griffin, K. W. (2005). Prevention science, drug abuse prevention and life skills training: Comments on the state of the science. *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, 1(1), 63-78.

Bowen, G. L., Richman, J. M., & Bowen, N. K. (2000). Families in the context of community across time. In S. Price, P. McKenry, & M. Murphy (Eds.), *Families across time* (pp. 117-128). Los Angeles: Roxbury.

Braithwaite, V. (2002). Reducing ageism. In T. D. Nelson (Ed.), *Ageism: Stereotyping and prejudice against older persons* (pp. 311-338). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Brillon, Y. (1987). *Victimization and fear of crime among the elderly*. Toronto: Butterworths.

Bullock, J. R., & Osborne, S. S. (1999). Seniors, volunteers and families: Perspectives of an intergenerational program in a rural community. *Educational Gerontologist*, 25(3), 41-53.

Capaldi, D. M., Dishion, T. J., Stoolmiller, M., & Yoerger, K. (2001). Aggression toward female partners by at-risk young men: The contribution of male adolescent friendships. *Developmental Psychology*, 37, 61-73.

Caputo, T., Weiler, R., & Green, L. (1997). *Peer helper initiatives for out-of-the-mainstream youth*. Canada's Drug Strategy. Ottawa: Health Canada.

Carr, R. (1998, March). Out of the mainstream youth. *Odyssey*, 4, 16-17.

Centre for Research on Youth at Risk. (1998). *Fact sheets on youth justice*. Fredericton, NB: St. Thomas University.

Cho, H., Hallfros, D. D., & Sanchez, V. (2005). Evaluation of a high school peer group intervention for at-risk youth. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 33(3), 363-374.

Coloroso, B. (2002). *The bully, the bullied and the bystander*. Toronto: Harper Collins.

Couper, D. P., Sheehan, N. W., & Thomas, E. L. (1991). Attitude toward old people: The impact of an intergenerational program. *Educational Gerontologist*, 17(1), 41-53.

Dauvergne, M., & Johnson, H. (2001). Children witnessing family violence. *Juristat*, 21(6), 1-13.

de Souza, E. M. (2003). Intergenerational interaction in health promotion: A qualitative study in Brazil. *Rev. Saude Publica*, 37(4), 220-242.

Dishion, T. J., Eddy, J., Haas, E., Li, F., & Spracklen, K. (1997). Friendships and violent behavior during adolescence. *Social Development*, 6(2), 207-223.

Ditton, J., Chadee, D., Farral, S., Gilchrist, E., & Bannister, J. (2004). From imitation to intimidation: A note on the curious and changing relationship between the media, crime and fear of crime. *British Journal of Criminology*, 44, 595-610.

Doi, S. C., & DiLorenzo, R. M. (1993). An evaluation of a tobacco use education-prevention program: A pilot study. *Journal of Substance Abuse*, 5, 73-79.

Dryfoos, J. G. (1990). *Adolescents at risk: Prevalence and prevention*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Dubois, D. L., Holloway, B. E., Valentine, J. C., & Cooper, H. (2002). Effectiveness of mentoring programs for youth: A meta-analytic review. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 30(2), 157-197.

Ellickson, P. L., & Bell, R. M. (1990). Drug prevention in junior high: A multi-site longitudinal test, *Science*, 247(4948), 1299-1305.

Fagan, A. A., & Mihalic, S. F. (2003). Strategies for enhancing the adoption of school-based prevention programs. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 31(3), 235-253.

Farrall, S. (2002). *Rethinking what works with offenders: Probation, social context and desistance from crime*. Cullompton, UK: Willan Publishing.

Farrington, D. (1997). Evaluating a community crime prevention program. *Evaluation*, 3(2), 157-173.

Farrington, D. (2000). Explaining and preventing crime: The globalisation of knowledge. *Criminology*, 38, 1-24.

Farrington, D. (2002). Developmental criminology and risk-focused prevention. In M. Maguire, R. Morgan, & R. Reiner (Eds.), *Oxford handbook of criminology* (3rd ed., pp. 602-640). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Fein, R. A., Vossekuil, B., Pollack, W. S., Borum, R., Modzeleski, W., & Reddy, M. (2002). *Threat assessment in schools: A guide to managing threatening situations and to creating safe school climates*. Washington, DC: United States Department of Education.

Fergus, S., & Zimmerman, M. A. (2005). Adolescent resilience: A framework for understanding healthy development in the face of risk. *Annual Review of Public Health, 26*, 399-419.

Fergusson, D. M., & Lynskey, M. T. (1996). Adolescent resiliency to family adversity. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 37*(3), 281-292.

Fiester, L. (1998). *Evaluating comprehensive community change*. Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Finn, P. (1981). Institutionalizing peer education in the health education classroom. *Education Leadership, 51*, 27-30.

France, A., & Crow, I. (2005). Using the “risk factor paradigm” in prevention: Lessons from the evaluation of Communities that Care. *Children & Society, 19*(2), 174-184.

Garbarino, J., & deLara, E. (2002). *And words can hurt forever*. New York: Free Press.

Gendreau, P., Goggin, C., & Smith, P. (1999). The forgotten issue in effective correctional treatment: Program implementation. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 43*(2), 180-187.

Glass, T. A., Freedman, M., Carlson, M. C., Hill, J., Frick, K. D., Ialongo, N., et al. (2004). Experience corps: Design of an intergenerational program to boost social capital and promote the health of an aging society. *Journal of Urban Health, 81*(1), 94-105.

Gottfredson, D. C., & Gottfredson, G. D. (2002). Quality of school-based prevention programs: Results from a national survey. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, 39*(1), 3-35.

Gottfredson, D. C., & Wilson, D. B. (2003). Characteristics of effective school-based substance abuse prevention. *Prevention Science, 4*(1), 27-38.

Government of Canada. (1997). *Young people say*. Report from the youth consultation initiative of the National Crime Prevention Council. Ottawa: Justice Canada.

Hagestad, G. O. (1998, October). *Towards a society for all ages: New thinking, new language, new conversations*. Keynote address at the launch of the International Year of Older Persons, 1999. New York: United Nations.

Hagestad, G. O., & Uhlenberg, P. (2005). The social separation of old and young: A root of ageism. *Journal of Social Issues*, 61(2), 343-360.

Hagell, A. (2007). Anti-social behaviour. In J. Coleman & A. Hagell (Eds.), *Adolescence, risk and resilience: Against the odds* (pp. 125-142). Sussex, UK: John Wiley and Sons.

Harachi, T. W., Catalano, R., & Hawkins, J. D. (1999). *The nature of bullying: A cross-national perspective*. New York: Routledge.

Harper, G. W., & Carver, L. J. (1999). "Out-of-the-mainstream" youth as partners in collaborative research: Exploring the benefits and challenges. *Health Education & Behavior*, 26(2), 250-265.

Harris, S. M., & Dersch, C. A. (2001). I'm just not like that: Investigating the intergenerational cycle of violence. *Family Journal*, 9(3), 250-258.

Hawkins, J. D. (1995). Controlling crime before it happens: Risk focused prevention. *National Institute of Justice Journal*, 229, 10-17.

Hawkins, J. D., & Catalano, R.F. (1995). *Risk-focused prevention: Using the social development strategy*. Seattle: Developmental Research and Programs, Inc.

Hawkins, J. D., Catalano, R., & Arthur, W. (2002). Promoting science-based prevention in communities. *Addictive Behaviors*, 27(6), 951-976.

Hawkins, J. D., Brown, E. C., Oesterle, S., Arthur, M. W., Abbott, R. D., & Catalano, R. F. (2008). Early effects of Communities that Care on targeted risks and initiation of delinquent behavior and substance use. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 43(1), 15-22.

Hodgson, P. (2000). *Community partnerships symposium on youth justice renewal: Youth roundtable*. Department of Justice, Canada. Retrieved May 12, 2010, from <http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/pi/yj-jj/prt/yrt.html>

Hoffman, J. S. (2004). *Youth violence, resilience and rehabilitation*. New York: LFP Scholarly Publishing.

Howell, J. (Ed.). (1995). *Guide for implementing the comprehensive strategy for serious, violent, and chronic juvenile offenders*. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice.

Hugh-Jones, S., & Smith, P. K. (1999). Self reports of short- and long-term effects of bullying on children who stammer. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 69(2), 141-158.

Irwin, C. E., & Millstein, S. G. (1992). Risk-taking behaviors and biopsychosocial development during adolescence. In E. J. Susman, L. V. Feagans, & W. J. Ray (Eds.), *Emotion, cognition, health and development in children and adolescents* (pp. 75-102). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Jakobsson, U. (2005). Loneliness, fear, and quality of life among elderly in Sweden: A gender perspective. *Aging Clinical and Experimental Research*, 17(6), 494-501.

Katz, R. C., Robisch, C. M., & Telch, M. J. (1989). Acquisition of smoking refusal skills in junior high school students. *Addictive Behaviors*, 14(2), 201-204.

Kellam, D. G., Sheppard, C., Brown, J., & Fleming, P. (1982). Social adaptation to first grade and teenage drug, alcohol, and cigarette use. *Journal of School Health*, 52, 301-306.

Krovetz, M. L. (1999). Resiliency: A key element for supporting youth at risk. *Clearing House*, 73(2), 121-124.

Kuehne, V. S. (2003). The state of our art: Intergenerational program research and evaluation. *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, 1(1), 145-161.

Kumpulainen, K., & Rasanen, E. (2000). Children involved in bullying at elementary school age: Their psychiatric symptoms and deviance in adolescence. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 24(12), 1567-1577.

Lane, J. (2006). Exploring fear of general and gang crimes among juveniles on probation: The impacts of delinquent behaviors. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 4(1), 34-54.

Larkin, E., & Newman, S. (1997). Intergenerational studies: A multi-disciplinary field. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 28(1/2), 5-17.

Latimer, J. (2001). A meta-analytical examination of youth delinquency, family treatment and recidivism. *Canadian Journal of Criminology*, 43(2), 237-253.

Leone, L. E. (1994). Education services for youth with disabilities in a state-operated juvenile correctional system: Case study and analysis. *Journal of Special Education*, 28(10), 43-58.

Losel, F., & Bliesener, T. (1994). Some high-risk adolescents do not develop conduct problems: A study of protective factors. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 17(4), 753-777.

Luthar, S. S., Cicchetti, D., & Becker, B. (2000). The construct of resilience: A critical evaluation and guidelines for future work. *Child Development*, 71(3), 543-562.

Lyznicki, J. M., McCaffree, M. A., & Robinowitz, C. B. (2004). Childhood bullying: Implications for physicians. *American Family Physician*, 70(9), 1723-1728.

May, D. C., & Dunaway, R. G. (2000). Predictors of fear of criminal victimization at school among adolescents. *Sociological Spectrum*, 20(2), 149-169.

McCubbin, H., Patterson, J., & Thompson, A. (1983). *Social stress and the family: Advances and developments in family stress theory and research*. New York: Haworth.

McIntyre, T. (1993). Behaviourally disordered youth in correctional centres: Prevalence, programming, and teacher training. *Behavioural Disorders*, 18(3), 167-176.

McLaughlin, M. W., Irby, M. A., & Langman, J. (1994). *Urban sanctuaries: Neighborhood organizations in the lives and futures of inner-city youth*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Meshel, D. S., & McGlynn, R. P. (2004). Intergenerational contact, attitudes and stereotypes of adolescents and older people. *Educational Gerontology, 30*(6), 457-479.

Mihalic, S. F., & Irwin, K. (2003). Blueprints for violence prevention: From research to real-world settings – Factors influencing the successful replication of model programs. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice, 1*(4), 307-324.

Moffitt, T. E., Caspi, A., Harrington, H., & Milne, B. J. (2002). Males on the life-course- persistent and adolescence-limited antisocial pathways: Follow-up at age 26 years. *Development and Psychopathology, 14*, 179-207.

Nansel, T. R., Overpeck, M., Pilla, R. S., Ruan, W., Simons-Morton, B., & Scheidt, P. (2001). Bullying behaviors among U.S. youth: Prevalence and association with psychosocial adjustment. *Journal of the American Medical Association, 285*(16), 2094-2100.

Olsson, C., Bond, L., Burns, J., Vella-Broderick, D., & Sawyer, S. (2003). Adolescent resilience: A concept analysis. *Journal of Adolescence, 26*(1), 1-11.

Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at school: What we know and what we can do*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Patterson, G. R. (1995). Coercion as a basis for early age of onset for arrest. In J. McCord (Ed.), *Coercion and punishment in long term perspectives* (pp. 81-105). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Powell, K. E., Muir-McClain, L., & Halasyamani, L. (1996). A review of selected school-based conflict resolution and peer mediation projects. *Peer Facilitator Quarterly, 13*, 31-38.

Richmond, J. B., & Beardslee, W. R. (1988). Resiliency: Research and practical implications for pediatricians. *Journal of Developmental and Behavioural Pediatrics, 9*(3), 157-163.

Robertson, A. A., Grimes, P. W., & Rogers, K. E. (2001). A short-run cost-benefit analysis of community-based interventions for juvenile offenders. *Crime and Delinquency, 47*(2), 265-285.

Roehlkepartain, E. C. (1996). Rebuilding community: A vision for peer helping. *Peer Facilitator Quarterly, 13*, 27-30.

Ronka, A., Oravala, S., & Pulkkinen, L. (2002). "I met this wife of mine and things got on a better track". Turning points in risk development. *Journal of Adolescence, 25*(1), 47-63.

Rubin, L. B. (Ed.). (1996). *The transcendent child: Tales of triumph over the past*. New York: Harper Collins.

Rutter, M. (1987). Resilience in the face of adversity. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 147, 598-611.

Salmivalli, C., Lagerspetz, K., Bjorkqvist, K., Osterman, K., & Kaukiainen, A. (1996). Bullying as a group process: Participant roles and their relation to social status within the group. *Aggressive Behavior*, 22(1), 1-15.

Schoenwald, S. K., Scherer, D. G., & Brondino, M. J. (1997). Effective community-based treatments for serious juvenile offenders. In S. W. Henggeler & A. B. Santos (Eds.), *Innovative services for "difficult to treat" populations* (pp. 65-82). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press.

Schwartz, D., Dodge, K. A., Pettit, G. S., & Bates, J. E. (1997). The early socialization of aggressive victims of bullying. *Child Development*, 68(2), 665-675.

Seccombe, K. (2002). "Beating the odds" versus "changing the odds": Poverty, resilience and family policy. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 64(2), 384-395.

Shaffer, J. N., & Ruback, R. B. (2002). *Violent victimization as a risk factor for violent offending among juveniles*. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Shaw, M. (2001). *Investing in youth: International approaches to preventing crime and victimization*. Montréal: International Centre for the Prevention of Crime.

Shiner, M. (1999). Defining peer education. *Journal of Adolescence*, 24(4), 555-566.

Smith, C., Lizotte, A. J., Thornberry, T. P., & Krohn, M. D. (1995). Resilient youth: Identifying factors that prevent high-risk youth from engaging in delinquency and drug use. In A. S. Blau & J. Hagan (Eds.), *Current perspectives on aging and the life cycle* (pp. 217-247). Greenwich, CT: JAI.

Sprott, J. B. (2004). The development of early delinquency: Can classroom and school climates make a difference? *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 46(5), 553-572.

Taylor, R. B. (2001). *Breaking away from broken windows*. Boulder, CO: Westview.

Tindall, J. A. (1995). *Peer programs: An in-depth look at peer helping, planning, implementing and administration*. Bristol, PA: Taylor and Francis Group.

Tobler, N. S. (1992). Drug prevention programs can work: Research findings. *Journal of Addictive Diseases*, 11(3), 1-28.

Turner, M. G., Hartman, J. L., Exum, M. L., & Cullen, F. T. (2007). Examining the cumulative effects of protective factors: Resiliency among a national sample of high-risk youth. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 46(1/2), 81-111.

United Nations. (2001). *World population ageing: 1950-2050*. New York: Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

United States Surgeon General. (2001). *Youth violence: A report of the Surgeon General*. Washington, DC: Author.

Valentine, L., & Feinauer, L. L. (1993). Resilience factors associated with female survivors of childhood sexual abuse. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 21(3), 216-224.

Waldie, K., & Spreen, O. (1993). The relationship between learning disabilities and persisting delinquency. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 26(6), 417-423.

Waller, M. A. (2001). Resilience in ecosystemic context: Evolution of the concept. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 71(3), 290-297.

Walsh, E. (1998). *Strengthening family resilience*. New York: Guilford.

Ward, C. R. (1997). Intergenerational program evaluation for 1990s and beyond. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 28(3), 173-181.

Werner, E., & Smith, R. (1992). *Overcoming the odds: High-risk children from birth to adulthood*. New York: Cornell University Press.

Werner, E., & Smith, R. (2001). *Journeys from childhood to the midlife: Risk, resilience and recovery*. New York: Cornell University Press.

Whitney, I., & Smith, P. K. (1993). A survey of the nature and extent of bullying in junior/middle and secondary schools. *Educational Research*, 35(1), 3-25.

Whyte, B. (2003). Recent developments in youth crime policy and practice in Scotland. *Youth Justice*, 3(2), 74-85.

Whyte, B. (2004). Effectiveness, research and youth justice. *Youth Justice*, 4(1), 3-21.

Wrenn, R. M., Merdinger, J., Parry, J. K., & Miller, D. (1991). The elderly and the young: A cooperative endeavor. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 17(1/2), 93-104.

Zahn-Waxler, C., & Smith, K. D. (1992). The development of prosocial behaviour. In V. B. Hasselt & M. Hersen (Eds.), *Handbook of social development: A lifespan perspective* (pp. 229-256). New York: Plenum.

Zara, G., & Farrington, D. P. (2009). Childhood and adolescent predictors of late onset criminal careers. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 38(3), 287-300.



## CHAPTER 10

### ADDRESSING THE PHENOMENON OF GANGS

#### The Youth and Street Gangs Project: History, Basic Principles, and Major Developments of a Prevention Project Based on Community Social Development

Sylvie Hamel, Marie-Marthe Cousineau, and Sophie Léveillé, in collaboration with Martine Vézina and Julie Savignac

**Abstract:** The authors discuss the apparent proliferation of street gangs, noting that society's first reflex is to try to eradicate the phenomenon through repression, which is sometimes necessary when gang activities become truly dangerous, but is insufficient to truly eliminate the problem. They trace the evolution of the Youth and Street Gangs Project in three districts of Greater Montréal and analyze the new and instructive information it provides. This innovative project aims to help the communities develop a prevention model, but also makes research an integral part of the process, so the process can be described and analyzed as its various stages unfold. Based on a number of years of data, the authors argue that while the project is designed essentially to prevent the phenomenon of gangs, its ultimate challenge is to find ways to encourage youth to integrate and join their communities, in the same way that they integrate and join gangs.

Although it is not new, the phenomenon of street gangs has been the object of unprecedented attention in Québec and Canada, particularly over the past ten years. During this period, the presence of gangs has become increasingly obvious; in some neighbourhoods, it has reached the point where social and community activities have become almost paralyzed.

How, then, does one describe this phenomenon? Has it greatly increased? Is it a matter of greater visibility? Have our youth changed? Perhaps the answer is a bit of all three. Statistics, with all their faults and qualities, seem to indicate that we are witnessing an increase in the phenomenon, particularly when it comes to gang-related violence. It is also obvious that the media and agents of social control (both formal and informal), as well as the researchers, are paying much greater attention to the issue. Finally, it would appear that youth have also changed. It is no longer rare to hear experienced educators say that they cannot relate to their students, or to have parents admit that they cannot cope with their children any more.

In the face of this apparent proliferation in the number of gangs and the subsequent increased concern on the part of citizens when they feel threatened, the first reflex was to try to eradicate the phenomenon. Attempts were made to nip in the bud the apparently greater and more widespread activity of gangs. An essentially repressive approach was adopted whereby authorities attempted to dismantle gangs by attacking the hard-

core elements involved. While taking such action is sometimes necessary, particularly when gang activities become truly dangerous, it is certainly not sufficient to eliminate the problem. One must understand that the more or less delinquent activity of gangs represents only one facet of their organization. Indeed, behind every gang are gang members, and behind every gang member is a young person, who is, in turn, part of today's so-called changing and difficult to understand youth. It is in the context of these facts and considerations while also enriched by extensive writings (Hébert, Hamel, & Savoie, 1997) and by a survey of present and past youth gang members, as well as street youth interveners working with these youth (Hamel, Fredette, Blais, & Bertot, 1998) that the Youth and Street Gangs Project was conceived. In the following pages, we trace the project's evolution and analyze the new and instructive information it provides.

Although the project has been described as innovative, it was nonetheless inspired by recommendations made by numerous experts in the field. A large number of articles and studies concerning gangs have been produced since the 1980s, but the fallout from the impact of the phenomenon, fanned by media coverage, would appear to have delayed the comprehensive implementation of these recommendations. Indeed, gangs have been the topic of a number of studies since the 1980s, most of which attest to the alarming growth of the phenomenon in North America. As a result, public opinion has been put on alert. One should be cautious when interpreting these studies, since the data they are based on is inevitably affected not only by the incredible diversity of types of gangs and the ways in which they manifest themselves, but also by the methodology used to collect such data. It is difficult to produce a single all-encompassing definition of gangs since they are so dissimilar and constantly change their make-up, modus operandi, and orientation. As a result, studies that analyze the extent of the phenomenon, because they are generally based on different definitions, do not reflect the true picture. In any case, the undeniable discomfort and worry experienced by the general public – and here we include experts, social workers, parents, and former gang members themselves – necessitates that new action be taken in addition to complementary repressive intervention. Therefore, the Youth and Street Gangs Project has been conceived at an opportune moment.

## **The Youth and Street Gangs Project**

The proponents of the Youth and Street Gangs Project propose to combat the phenomenon of gangs through a prevention program based on *community social development*<sup>1</sup>. To this end, community groups were approached in each of the three communities in the Greater Montréal region where pilot projects were underway. For the benefit of their communities, including their youth, it was suggested that they devote their combined strength and expertise to developing a renewed understanding of the phenomenon of gangs as well as a joint action plan to combat the phenomenon. In other words, the Youth and Street Gangs Project is an opportunity to develop and test a social theory based on the principles of empowerment, organization, and cooperation. These principles are considered indispensable ingredients in preventing the formation of gangs and their associated problems, in particular violence and youth crime.

The Youth and Street Gangs Project is not only innovative in terms of the prevention model it aims to help the communities develop, but also in making research an integral part of the process, so as to describe and analyze the process as its various stages

unfold. The Youth and Street Gangs Project team faces the challenge of managing and structuring the research process, which will take the form of a participatory evaluation, while being careful not to influence and direct the process itself. This means that the researchers have to be constantly aware of their actions and of the influence that they can have over the other stakeholders, who generally have never been involved in research in this manner, that is, as an equal partner concerned with the betterment of society, where gangs would have neither the right nor, better yet, the reason to rule. More often than not, researchers working in this area apply and test preconceived notions that correspond to their own vision. Obviously, while this vision has been developed based on rich and in-depth knowledge, it is nonetheless generic and often out of context. As a result, making practical use of the research becomes difficult, or even impossible, for those working in the field.

Given the above, the stakes for the research project are high; the biggest and most important challenge is, without a doubt, to identify the role and place occupied by research in the processes that are, in fact, the principal goal of the study. This explains why we decided to go into more detail in this chapter than is normally done when presenting a project. A status report, or even a description of the objectives and general orientation of the Youth and Street Gangs Project, did not seem a sufficient foundation on which to base an analysis. Consequently, we decided to first describe the history and sociological framework that define the research (as well as its theoretical foundation) as influenced by the research team's reference points and training. It was at this juncture that the first signs of the influence of the research itself became apparent, since the results generated during the first analyses not only reflected the approach chosen by the researchers at the outset, but also influenced the recommendations for action and prevention. In addition, since the prevailing context opened the door to the possibility of new financing, the research team had the opportunity to develop the new recommendations presented to the Montreal Urban Community Police Department (SPCUM) into a five-year action plan on street gangs. We will discuss this plan in more detail later on. However, this meant that the team would be required to manage the project launch and promotion. To do so, the team would need to develop a clear message that communicated its vision of the problem, possible solutions, and its role in the process *per se*. As a result, the research team occupied a unique and influential position within the project – one that we propose to identify and document in this chapter.

## **The Origins of the Youth and Street Gangs Project**

It is important to remember that a number of years have passed since our first research project was undertaken, resulting in the launch of the Youth and Street Gangs Project, as currently funded by the Departments of Justice Canada and Public Safety Canada (formerly the Solicitor General of Canada). In response to a call for tenders initiated in 1995 by the Montréal Urban Community Police Department (SPCUM)<sup>2</sup>, the “Centres de jeunesse de Montréal” (Montréal Youth Centres) (CJM), the “Institut universitaire dans le domaine de la violence chez les jeunes” (An unofficial translation would be University Institute on Violence among Youth), and the “Institut de recherche pour le développement social des jeunes” (An unofficial translation would be Research Institute for the Social Development of Youth) (IRDS) were given the mandate to carry

out an initial study that involved creating an inventory of the existing literature about street gangs. This inventory would be used to help draw up a five-year strategic plan designed to prevent the development of the next generation of criminals in Greater Montréal. Specifically, the SPCUM wanted to know how gangs had been defined in the literature to date. It wanted information on the forms, types, and characteristics of the phenomenon, the way such groups are set up and structured, the desirable and undesirable aspects of gangs from the perspective of youth, the changes in the criminal world linked to the amplification of the phenomenon, and finally, the solutions known to be effective and promising in combatting the phenomenon.

These aspects of the phenomenon of gangs were documented based mainly on the U.S. literature, supplemented by a few articles from Canada and Québec (Hébert, Hamel, & Savoie, 1997). For one of the first times, the phenomenon of gangs was analyzed from a psycho-socio-criminological perspective. This was done in response to a request from the SPCUM, which believed that the adoption of a more broad-scale approach was a necessary part of the overall objective of formulating a process that differed markedly from those undertaken to date in Québec. The objective was to develop viable and effective prevention projects. This type of analysis would probably not have been undertaken if one of the researchers had not been trained as a social worker, and the other as a psychologist.

The same perspective was adopted in conducting a second study, this time in the field. In May 1997, shortly after the first report was tabled, the SPCUM granted a new research mandate to its partners (CJM and IRDS), who in turn invited a researcher from the International Centre on Comparative Criminology (CICC) to join them. Thus, a new research team was formed based on an alliance between psychology, sociology, and criminology.

As part of this second research project, the SPCUM wanted to conduct interviews with former gang members among youth in the Montréal region. Its goal was to verify to what extent the youths' experience within gangs (the phenomenological aspect of their experience) and the measures they recommended to counter the phenomenon (the cognitive aspect) corresponded to the information already gleaned from the literature, as well as the first steps taken to counter the phenomenon. The overall goal was to tease out the aspects that would best apply in the Greater Montréal context, and this time the research was to result in a concrete proposal for a five-year strategic plan based on the body of knowledge accumulated since 1995. Thus, meetings were set up with 31 youth (21 boys and 10 girls, including 23 ex-gang members and 8 active gang members). The objective was to learn about their experience within gangs, the reasons for and results of joining a gang, and their opinions on possible solutions and measures to combat or reduce the phenomenon of gangs. The youth described how and why they joined and, in some cases, left the gang. They also described ways to prevent youth from being tempted by the adventuresome allure of being a gang member, and how to help those who wanted out.

Following this, it was deemed appropriate to supplement the knowledge gained from the literature and the youths' experience with that of 15 key stakeholders from within the police, educational, judicial, social services, and community services sectors. These

individuals agreed to participate in a semi-directive interview where they were invited to share their knowledge and perceptions of the experience of youth in gangs, as well as their recommendations on how best to address the issue.

The report, tabled in May 1998 (Hamel, Fredette, Blais, & Bertot, 1998, in collaboration with Cousineau), highlighted a surprising consistency among these three sources of knowledge (the literature, the youth, and the key stakeholders). All this accumulated knowledge formed the basis of the five-year strategic plan – more commonly known today as the Youth and Street Gangs Project – which is the subject of this chapter.

## Theoretical Principles

Our initial research project, one of the few such large-scale attempts to deal with the phenomenon of gangs in Montréal, was aimed at analyzing the complex question of gangs by trying to shed light not only on the violence and criminality of these groups, but also on the experience and satisfaction derived by the youth, as well as the quality of relationships they had with their environment.

This approach inevitably reflected the influence of the theoretical models that inspired us. First of all, one of our reference points was Maslow's (1973, p. 207) theory of human motivation; this theory states that to ensure their survival, balance, and integrity, humans are motivated to struggle continually to meet their basic needs. Maslow identifies five categories of fundamental needs. Psychological needs (basic needs such as eating, protecting oneself from cold and heat) come first. Other types of needs follow, including those related to personal safety and security, the need to associate and belong (social needs), self-love (the need for self-esteem), and the need for self-actualization and realizing one's potential (self-achievement).

Next we adopted Bronfenbrenner's (1979, p. 330) model of social ecology as a basis for action. The social ecology model posits that we should consider not only the individual (with his or her characteristics, personality, and needs), but also the community and, above all, the interaction between the two, which shapes and transforms what is known as social integration or affiliation. This model proposes that the individual and his or her environment (the ecosystem) are in constant interaction and that each influences the direction and development of the other. Furthermore, the ecosystem is in turn driven by the influence of other micro-systems (family, school, work, network of friends), by the quality of the relationships among them, and, in a larger sense, by the influence of beliefs, laws, and policies.

These two models contrast with other theories generally associated with the field of delinquency and most often used by researchers when addressing the issue of gangs. A key theory among the latter is that of social control. This theory holds that when youth have strong links with conventional institutions, thereby making illegal activities unacceptable, they are less inclined to join gangs and, as a result, are less likely to be subject to the influence of their peers (Elliot, 1979, 1985, 1989, as cited in Covey, Menard, & Franzese, 1992). In the same order of logic, another dominant theory when it comes to explaining the phenomenon of gangs is that of social disorganization (McKinney, 1988). This theory states that the inability of a society to contain and control

the deviant behaviour of its members is an indicator of a disorganized society. Such a society provides fertile ground for the development of deviant subcultures, that is, milieus and micro-systems where delinquency and the resultant illicit activities become a tradition and a way of life (Cohen, 1955; Cloward & Ohlin, 1960). Thus, certain neighbourhoods by their very nature generate gangs, and individuals living there are forced to join regardless of their needs and wishes. The gangs become the law in these milieus (Moore & Garcia, 1978, p. 239; Vigil, 1988, p. 202).

The theory of differential opportunities is also crucial when studying gangs. This theory maintains that in a context where economic and social opportunities are few or non-existent, the most disadvantaged youth believe that they have more to gain from joining gangs than the community at large. These advantages are derived from their status as gang members, as well as from the power, excitement, and pleasure that stem from belonging to a group. Although this is close to the “needs theory”, the benefits and opportunities sought by youth do not seem to be seen as essential needs, which would legitimize somewhat the desire to fill them.

Finally, Thornberry (1998), in his work based on the social facilitation model, argues that gangs act as a gateway to criminal activity. To some extent, such groups present opportunities for deviance and delinquency, which is particularly attractive to a certain category of youth who, because of their specific personality and characteristics, are attracted to marginality and the world of gangs.

Although the above comments are no more than a broad-brush overview of the main models generally used to explain the phenomenon of gangs, they nevertheless point to several clear trends. On the one hand, there is no acceptance of the fact that youth may have legitimate reasons, such as stability and adaptation, for joining gangs; this despite the fact, acknowledged notably by LeBlanc (1991) that joining a group is a normal and healthy reflex during adolescence. If youth join gangs, it is because they are grappling with a deviant personality or other personal difficulties that cause them to be particularly attracted to power and easy solutions. Accordingly, such individuals do not have the qualities required to change (or even have a grasp on) their environment, particularly since this environment appears to be relatively immutable, disorganized, incapable of containing violence and crime, and conducive to the emergence of deviant subcultures. It would appear from this overview that the individual and his or her environment do not influence each other or, at the very least, that this relationship is not of great interest to those researchers who adopt the models we have just described.

The hypotheses underlying these theories of delinquency run counter to the premises of the models on which we chose to base our research into the phenomenon of gangs. Our view is more in tune with constructivist paradigms of the type that inspired sociological studies by Touraine (1992) and Dubet (1994), which hold that members of the human community have the ability to take their lives in hand and to define their own goals in life. These paradigms also assume that people are empowered and can impact the external conditions that affect and influence their course in life, in order to achieve their individual and collective dreams (Dallaire, 1998).

## Knowledge Developed on the Phenomenon of Gangs Within the Framework of our Research

Despite the challenge presented by adopting such an approach, which was inspired by a paradigm rarely applied to the phenomenon of gangs, the outcomes of the initial research carried out through the Youth and Street Gangs Project are strikingly clear. They basically show that beyond the violence and crime, the phenomenon of gangs is associated with another, equally important problem: the fact that youth join gangs to find a way to meet their most basic needs (a sense of belonging, acknowledgement, and validation) – needs that they are unable to meet elsewhere in their environment (family, school, community).

### The Personal and Social Characteristics of Youth Who Join Gangs

At the outset, these results help to flesh out the portrait of youth who join gangs, indicating that in addition to their propensity for violence, these youth also stand out because of their isolation, or even exclusion. Apart from their network of friends and acquaintances, they have very few ties and share very few of the values of the institutions around them. Their family ties have been weakened over time by repeated ruptures, and school neither validates nor interests them. Their violence and the risks they seem ready to take in facing death and constantly pushing their limits appear to be the only way they have of validating their existence, of feeling alive. Prior to joining a gang, none or very few of their life experiences had taught them their true value or given them the opportunity to achieve their dreams.

### The Gang Experience

Thus, when one looks at the roots of the violence and criminal acts committed by young gang members, and analyzes the context in which such acts occur, they can be seen in another light. From this perspective, it would appear that they are generally part of a dynamic whereby youth are often forced into this behaviour because it prevents or postpones the breakup of the group, and therefore the loss of ties. These youth are literally intoxicated by the intensity of the relations they develop within these groups, and they are willing to do anything to protect them. Preventing the death of the group is equivalent to protecting their own existence.

It should also be pointed out that violence and crime are not the only activities of young gang members. Even today, and despite the changes that have occurred in terms of issues and vocations, these groups continue to serve as a place for youth to socialize and to go about building their identity and personality. Moreover, it is acknowledged that the experience of youth in these groups is influenced by the latter's orientation. Indeed, only a small percentage of groups in the world of gangs regularly engage in violence and crime, and these groups have a strong and stable structure designed to allow them to control illegal markets. As for the rest, even in the most criminal groups, the structure and level of organization necessary for their operation means that members occupy different social ranks (leader, peripheral members, and associate members) and play different roles (occasional or specific delinquency, recruitment, enforcement of rules, planning or carrying out of crimes). This being the case, the experience in gangs may

not necessarily be linked directly to aggression, but rather to the avoidance of aggression (some youth occupying intermediary positions are able to avoid certain situations or tests) or to the avoidance of its consequences (here one thinks of the young women who prostitute themselves to meet the economic needs of the group, or of the young men who are forced to get involved in turf wars).

### **Affiliation**

With respect to affiliation, the phenomenon of gangs appears first and foremost to be a matter of belonging and identification for youth. One can even state that the main reason youth join a gang is to obtain protection that is not forthcoming from their entourage. And if their judgment concerning their environment is in fact correct, it can only serve to reinforce the negative perception they already have of the world in which they live.

Seen from this perspective, gangs feed on the attraction felt by youth by projecting an image of strength, care, and attention. Moreover, the majority of the youth we met told us that they saw gangs as an opportunity to build a new family. Many described their experience in terms of a true love story, recalling the pleasure they felt in being supported, united, understood, acknowledged, and respected...for the first time!

This forced us to rethink our preconceived notion that the only reason youth joined gangs was because they felt threatened and intimidated; on the contrary, it would appear that in most cases they are won over gradually in a seductive and friendly manner.

### **Disaffiliation**

Similarly, youth recounted their departure from gangs with nostalgia, saying that they still felt a terrible emptiness as a result of the rupture. It is true that leaving a gang can certainly be brutal, since it is generally triggered by a climactic event accompanied by violence and danger through an arrest or an institutional intervention (child welfare). But at this stage, the departure is only physical. Stunned and dazed, these youth must first get their wits about them before completing their disaffiliation process. Some feel empty at this point; they had been so devoted to and dependent on gangs, and had lived such high-intensity experiences (strong emotions, risk-taking, and adventures), that they had completely lost touch with themselves. Indeed, although leaving gangs can cause great disarray, it is not so much because of the fear of reprisals, but rather because it forces these youth to reclaim their sense of self.

### **Recommendations for Action and Prevention**

These results placed the angst of these youth at the very centre of our attention. Apparently youth join gangs to create ties and to find a sense of belonging that they do not seem to find (or are not able to develop) elsewhere. At the same time, these results reinforced our belief that it is possible to prevent the phenomenon of gangs only by setting in place the conditions required for *youth to join and integrate into their community in the same way they join and integrate into gangs*.

Even before we had met these youth and the key stakeholders involved, the writings of the most respected experts in the field of gangs (Spergel, 1995; Howell, 2000) had already pointed us in this direction. What we have retained from these experts is the great value they place on taking a community-based approach. It is their view that such an approach can target a number of variables at once (youth, their families, schools, and communities) and include a number of possible strategies, the most important of which would be mobilizing the community, social intervention, creating significant opportunities for youth, organizational development, and repression when necessary. They believe that this set of conditions is necessary if one wishes to prevent the phenomenon of gangs. In their view, once such conditions have been brought together and incorporated over a continuum of intervention, the ability exists to create synergy among the various institutions; this synergy, in turn, is indispensable for the true integration of youth into the community. Under these conditions, gangs would appear less attractive.

This is why we based our proposal, which had been presented to the SPCUM in the form of a five-year strategic plan, on the principles of the community development approach (or what we prefer to call the “community **social** development” approach). We prefer this latter terminology because it better highlights the possibilities for change and advancement that we attribute to the approach. These possibilities stem from the empowerment of communities (local or regional) that get organized and take themselves in hand, thereby increasing their chances of developing significant and appropriate solutions. In other words, community social development paves the ways for actions and interventions that are tailor-made, personalized, and coherent. Furthermore, the conditions are perfectly adapted to the complex nature of the phenomenon of gangs and to the objective that must be sought – to encourage the participation of all youth in society.

The initiative that we are proposing draws inspiration in particular from a model of positive social development called Communities That Care (Hawkins & Catalano, 1992). It was developed within the framework of a program that was designed to prevent delinquency and drug abuse, which often go hand in hand. This model proposes a specific frame of reference intended to assist in a concrete process of community mobilization and social development. Moreover, we were undoubtedly guided by the arguments its proponents make with respect to the pertinence – if not the necessity – of creating a positive social environment around youth. Regardless of who they are, this would be a way of satisfying their needs and ensuring that they recognize the opportunity that their community is offering them to learn, to build their lives, and to effect change. In such an environment, delinquency would in fact tend to lose its vitality, as would all the other associated problems.

Following the lead of the model’s designers, we endorse five fundamental objectives that have been proven effective (Hawkins & Catalano, 1992) in contributing to the development of a positive social environment for youth. They include:

1. To encourage links with adults (by identifying individuals and role models);
2. To offer youth real and concrete opportunities to integrate into the community (by giving them responsibilities and having confidence in them);

3. To train youth to develop the necessary skills so that their integration is a success;
4. To recognize their efforts to integrate (reinforcement); and
5. To develop clear values and role models so that youth are truly tempted to adopt them (coherence of messages).

In even more concrete terms, the five-year strategic plan presented in 1998 proposes that pilot projects should be carried out in three communities in the Greater Montréal region. These communities were chosen on the basis of two criteria: firstly, because we knew that they were concerned in different ways by the phenomenon of gangs, and secondly, because they were known for their experience in working collectively. These two ingredients seemed essential, since the main goal was to create – based on the experience of these three communities – a model for preventing the phenomenon of gangs that is built upon the principles of community social development and raises the twofold challenge of cooperation and partnership.

As a result, these communities were chosen based on a certain number of criteria. There was no provision for comparing them to a “control” community, since the objective was not to experiment with a project but to actually build one with each of these pilot communities using their expertise and know-how (which would be identified through a detailed analysis of the processes involved).

## Initiatives to Follow Up on the Project

The month following the tabling of the five-year strategic plan, the Department of Justice and the Department of the Solicitor General of Canada launched a \$32 million crime prevention program. This program was part of a process initiated in 1994 aimed at implementing the National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention. The National Strategy had three main objectives:

1. To encourage collaboration among key government and non-governmental partners in order to reduce crime and victimization;
2. To help communities develop and implement local solutions to problems that contribute to crime and victimization; and
3. To increase public awareness and support for effective crime prevention measures.

Among the measures adopted to implement the National Strategy, the federal government set up a number of programs for financing innovative projects. One of these programs, the Crime Prevention Investment Fund, was set up to identify and evaluate social development approaches likely to prevent crime. Its first mandate was to collect reliable data on effective or promising ways to reduce risk factors related to crime and victimization.

Given the great similarity between the objectives of the National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention and the recommendations that we had just presented to the SPCUM concerning the prevention of the phenomenon of gangs, the research team felt that it should take action. The Crime Prevention Investment Fund clearly offered a unique opportunity to implement the five-year strategic plan. Indeed,

breaking with the often-criticized tradition of short-term funding, the Crime Prevention Investment Fund was open to projects of up to four years in duration. Furthermore, since it was designed above all to facilitate the evaluation of social development approaches, it was up to the research team to take the lead role. It would appear that if this opportunity for financing had not presented itself, the researchers would never have taken such an initiative. They might well have waited for the SPCUM to give the green light to the five-year strategic plan, as it had done for the previous two phases. But the SPCUM had other priorities at that time, particularly linked to the major restructuring it had undertaken with a view to becoming a community police service. On the other hand, the research team could not and would not attempt to go it alone. For one thing, the team wanted to follow the same principles of partnership and collaboration it had been espousing; for another, adhering to these principles was a precondition set by the federal departments concerned when considering any applications for funding.

The first ally of the research team turned out to be the Centres jeunesse de Montréal (Montréal Youth Centres – CJM). In fact, the team was already affiliated with the CJM since they sit on the Board of Directors of the IRDS, along with the Université de Montréal and the Université de Québec à Montréal. The CJM attempted to pave the way for the researchers by putting them in touch with two coordinators working in regions that included two of the communities targeted by the five-year strategic plan. As a result, a contact person from CJM introduced the research team to the Villeray-La Petite Patrie Committee to Prevent Violence, itself a member of the Table de concertation jeunesse (TN – an unofficial translation would be Youth Dialogue Coordinating Committee). The CJM contact person had been a member of both the “Table...” and the “Committee...” for several years and had an excellent reputation in the field.

The first meeting took place at the beginning of 1999, in other words nine months after the five-year strategic plan had been presented to the SPCUM. From then on, members of the research team participated regularly at meetings of the Villeray-La Petite Patrie Committee to Prevent Violence, allowing them to become familiar with their new and future partners. The Committee was told right from the beginning that the research team wanted to submit a letter of intent to the two federal departments with a view to implementing the five-year strategic plan, and wanted to do so with the support of local groups. The letter was sent in July of the same year, with the support of not only the “Table de concertation jeunesse Villeray-La Petite Patrie”, but also that of the “La Petite Patrie CLSC” (“Centre local de santé communautaire”) and of PACT de rue, a community group from the same community. Other supporters included the “Centre jeunesse de Montréal” (CJM), Service de police de Montréal (SPM), “Centre international de criminologie comparée” (CICC), and the “Institut de recherche du développement social” (IRDS). Finally, the VISA-Jeunes Committee, part of the “Table de concertation jeunesse de Montréal-Nord”, also supported the initiative. Links were established with this second community a month before the letter was sent via a local CLSC community organizer who had been approached by one of the researchers.

Thus, the five-year strategic plan began with the participation of two communities. The third community in Longueuil on the south shore of Montréal joined the project during the second year of funding. It met the same criteria as the first two pilot

communities, in other words, it had stakeholders that were concerned with the gang phenomenon in their milieu and was known for working in a collaborative fashion.

Funding was officially granted in June 2000. Prior to this, the research team had written an addendum to the letter of intent sent in September 1999, had been authorized to submit an application in January 1999, and had won the commitment of the CJM, SPM, CICC, and IRDS to contribute human resources (along with other partners from the two communities) and material resources that the funding agency wanted to include in the overall budget requested as part of the local contribution.

## The Message

June 2000 marked the beginning of an experience whose funding was ensured for four years, at least with respect to the evaluative research process. This process took the form of a participatory evaluation that ran parallel to the research process, since this is the main mandate of the Crime Prevention Investment Fund. Although this was good news for the research team, the community groups were not exactly jumping for joy. Obviously the strength of the project would depend not only on the associated research, but also, and above all, on the energy devoted by the key stakeholders in terms of developing the best activities and creating the best networks of partners. Why, then, was only the research segment funded? This problem, which had already been pointed out by the community groups, led the researchers to set aside a portion of the first draft budget for paying community group representatives to attend committee meetings. But in the view of the funding agency this was not justified; it felt that the pilot communities had been chosen precisely because they already had established networks, which the Youth and Street Gangs Project should simply join.

The researchers then had to come up with another plan to ensure that the project would function smoothly. This took the form of hiring liaison officers. Chosen and appointed by the community groups (in collaboration with the research team, since they were to be paid out of grant monies), the role of the liaison officers would be to lighten the workload of the respective community groups in the overall process. Accordingly, the liaison agents took charge of tasks related to organizing meetings, and attempted to facilitate the work of the partners by providing support between meetings. They collected information and met with certain partners that had decided not to work with the committee on a regular basis. Their role was also to guide and educate the researchers on certain aspects likely to influence the process, particularly with respect to the culture of collaboration within the community, as well as key historical events. With this in mind, they listened, interpreted, and responded to the concerns of the community groups. They also made presentations to other committees that were concerned with the issue of gangs and with whom it was important to build support – notably the Table de concertation jeunesse – to explain the orientation and progress of the partners' work. On several occasions they even provided research assistance by helping to collect data.

In a context where funding for research is experienced by many as a veritable paradox, this shows how researchers must adapt and attempt to find strategies that, without completely fulfilling the desire of community groups to be acknowledged, at least makes the research process more attractive to them. It is understandable that

researchers would want to work closely with these groups; in fact, they have no choice. Let us not forget that this goes to the very heart of the analysis that the research team was mandated to carry out: to chart the evolution of a project initiated by the groups themselves, and carried out based on their expertise and strengths.

With this in mind, the researchers made a point of acting in an open fashion. First of all, they laid their cards on the table as to their understanding of the phenomenon of gangs, as well as their view of the preventive action and approach to be taken in order to address it. Their message was the same as that described above.

As well, the researchers told the community groups that they were not approaching them with the idea of implementing a preconceived program. Rather, the role that the research team wanted to play was to provide the groups with resources and infrastructure, and to support them during a process that would enable them to formulate and implement their own action plan. In other words, the research team wanted to support them in formulating and implementing their own action plan by making available the team's resources. The contribution made by the research team took several forms: adoption of a number of strategies designed to ensure the smooth functioning of the process already underway; ongoing and instructive evaluation based on observations recorded as the experience unfolded; ideas concerning the choices to be offered; clarification of the information required to enable the communities to move ahead with their project; and finally, the sharing of knowledge with the stakeholders involved concerning program evaluation.

This process should force those involved neither to set up new projects nor to allocate new resources. Rather, it is a matter of reviewing and exchanging, explaining what has been done in the past, deciding how much of this can be used in an action plan based on a renewed understanding of the phenomenon of gangs, and determining how the actions or services can be organized. In this way, a program can be hammered out within a coherent, integrated framework that is adapted to the reality of the milieu. Thus, in accordance with the recommendations of the experts, action plans must not only be applied locally, but must also be drawn up and decided upon by local stakeholders. This is because to a great extent these groups create and are aware of their own situation and their own resources better than anyone else. In other words, the researchers encourage these groups to embark on a process rather than to target a specific destination; at the same time, the team members expect to be carried, guided, and influenced in a direction that they would not want to determine on their own. They contribute as much as possible, in the hope that the communities do the same.

This way of proceeding can be explained not only by the fact that the researchers do not see themselves as the only experts involved, but also because of the fear of repeating past errors. For example, by setting themselves up as leaders and experts, researchers in the past may well have evaluated and generated knowledge, but they also neglected to leave a lasting contribution or heritage behind when they left. In such situations, once projects had been completed and hypotheses tested, the only thing left behind were feelings of abuse and abandonment that exacerbated the resentment and suspicion with which research was viewed. In contrast, if the research being proposed in this case was successfully carried out in line with its principles and clearly demonstrated that

its hypothesis was well founded, then when the project was completed in 2004, the participating community groups would be strengthened. Furthermore, they would want to continue their struggle to prevent the phenomenon of gangs and would also be capable of guiding other communities wishing to follow the same path.

This context and these reasons were more than sufficient for the researchers to adopt an interactive and participatory approach, despite the fact that it was a new way of operating. It meant that they had almost no concrete examples to guide them, and thus would have to make do with general principles. The challenge would be to integrate these principles into the process without losing sight of their original vocation or their credibility as researchers.

Right from the beginning, the research team announced that the community groups would be called upon throughout the process. They would be asked to participate actively in the project evaluation, by helping to plan the project, build the necessary tools, and interpret the results. In return, the team members hoped that the groups would buy into the research and help them to formulate and structure their ideas, review certain aspects of their process, systematize certain actions, take stock of their action plan, verify to what extent the established objectives were met, and evaluate the impact of their actions. Designed in this way, the research project would help to support and to feed the overall process by encouraging it to develop and unfold, by documenting its phases and outcomes, and by identifying models and benchmarks for other communities that might want to try to prevent the phenomenon of gangs.

Given the size of this challenge, the research team took the initiative of proposing to the communities that another committee be set up. This committee would not be local in nature. Rather, it would bring together representatives of regional or supra-regional institutions able to provide an overview of the situation and willing to provide their support to the local groups. The members of this committee would be required to respect the initial agreement established with the communities, (i.e., that the latter would retain control over the action plans throughout the process, both with reference to their orientation and their implementation). Moreover, one representative from each local action committee would be designated to sit on the regional or supra-regional committee, thereby ensuring consistency.

The regional or supra-regional committee could take a number of actions to fulfill its mandate: implement protocols or policies to encourage the cohesion and coordination of activities at both the local and regional level; contribute a variety of services; help find financing required to implement action plans; and finally, help communities to solve problems that might arise. As well, the members of this committee could question local stakeholders as to the orientation and implementation of their action plan, provide constructive criticism, give their point of view, and even share information about their own projects and experiences.

The committee would not ultimately be formed until later on during the first year of the project – a year that would be devoted essentially to strengthening ties, forming networks, and completing the initial planning phases. In particular, this would involve preparing a status report, developing a common vocabulary, clarifying priorities and

objectives, making an inventory of the resources available, and possibly even choosing the change indicators.

In any case, this is what we were able to announce in terms of the subsequent steps, based on our generic understanding of all the stages to be completed. We did so reluctantly, however, because at that time we wanted at all costs to avoid overly influencing the process and the choices adopted by our partners. We did, however, have to respond to the community groups' need to have a concrete illustration of the road ahead, so that they could make an informed decision as to their level of commitment. We were already finding it necessary to compromise when it came to all our cherished principles and theories, and to learn to adapt as quickly and efficiently as possible to community realities.

## Conclusion

The Youth and Street Gangs Project is designed essentially to prevent the phenomenon of gangs. But the project's ultimate challenge is to find ways to encourage youth to integrate and join their community, in the same way that they integrate and join gangs. This is the project's leitmotif. Our previous research on gang-related literature and our own survey work previously discussed lead us to believe that, in order to deal with the gang phenomenon, the path we chose was the correct one. Thus, our project, which is based on various principles including partnerships, empowerment of individuals and the community, represents the ultimate road to potential success. More broadly, this project was built upon a social development and community foundation.

As these words were written, the project was entering its fifth year. The details of this adventure are included in a report authored by Hamel, Cousineau, and Vézina (2006) in which an in-depth analysis of the three community pilots is presented<sup>3</sup>. More specifically, the report describes the experience of the project's three local action committees whose members joined their efforts to help their communities and youth through research and the development of action plans aimed at dealing with the gang phenomenon.

The report concludes that the local action committees were able to develop and implement coherent action plans that included promising projects that were well adapted to local needs and sufficiently resourced. From this foundation and their solid communications network, the committees even appear to have established an ongoing base of support for their activities. With time, their networks have grown considerably, absorbing new human and financial resources in support and embellishment of their action plans. The most evident sign of success of the "Project Jeunesse et gangs de rue" lies not only in the continued existence of the three local committees but also in their capacity to extend a helping hand to other communities demonstrating an interest in joining the adventure.

Our observations from the early days of the pilot project continue to be valid. Three criteria are required to ensure success in a prevention strategy based on a community social development approach.

The first criterion involves taking the necessary time and resources to realistically evaluate the size and complex nature of the tasks to be accomplished. At the time we tabled the Youth and Street Gangs Project (Project Jeunesse et gangs de rue) evaluation plan, we had already identified a number of aspects that still require documentation in order to have a clear and precise grasp of the size and complex nature of these tasks. They include: (a) the chronology of events, since it is a matter of time, steps to be accomplished, preparation, and implementation; (b) the dynamics among the stakeholders, which must be correlated with their perceptions of the project's evolution, since it is a matter of consensus building (this involves explaining, promoting, and negotiating one's point of view); and (c) the links existing among the stakeholders at the outset, along with the new links they develop (since it is a matter of combining everyone's skills in order to increase the collective capacity to act). Moreover, it is likely that other aspects will prove to be just as important as the project unfolds.

The second criterion has to do with the importance of analyzing the context in which the project is taking place. In the absence of detailed and appropriate information concerning the context, it would be impossible to disseminate or transfer knowledge of any kind whatsoever. The processes, stakeholders, and research components of the project must all be seen in their context. In concrete terms, no one would truly be able to profit from the analysis of the processes without first being aware of the framework, conditions, and limits within which they are to be achieved.

Finally, the third criterion concerns acknowledging the specific nature of participatory evaluation research, and the fact that the research itself is a part of the process that it is describing and that it claims to evaluate. This position imposes an additional task – that of being a stakeholder and a partner in the project – which must not be neglected if the team wishes to give itself the best chance of meeting its objectives. Consequently, since the researchers are obliged to help prepare the very project that they will be observing, describing, and evaluating, they must be doubly rigorous when it comes to their scientific method. With this in mind, we chose to be proactive in assuming this unique position. Rather than trying to reject or avoid it, we decided to integrate it into the analysis as one of the variables that could influence the processes being studied. Roles within the research team were clearly and precisely defined. For example, it was agreed to exclude certain members from the project implementation processes so that they would be free to carry out their analysis.

If it is too early to reach conclusions on the full impact that the project had on Montréal youth street gangs, we can nevertheless conclude that we were successful in establishing a solid, structured, and efficient network for dealing with the gang phenomenon through the adoption of a common vision and new ways to resolve the problem.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Conseil de la santé et du bien-être du Québec (Québec Council on Health and Welfare) (2001) stated that: “a social development approach means that solutions must necessarily involve the community in a given territory”. However, we prefer the term *community social development*. We believe that this term more clearly and unequivocally refers to the essence of what is common to a given social group. Social development covers a number of concepts, including social prevention, mutual assistance, and community development. The definition that we prefer for community social development is quite similar to that given by the Office de la langue française for community development: “The set of processes by which the inhabitants of a country combine their efforts with those of the various levels of government in order to improve the economic, social and cultural situation of communities, to associate these communities with the life of the nation and to enable them to contribute fully to the progress of the country”. These processes presuppose two essential ingredients: that the citizens participate actively in efforts undertaken to improve their quality of life, and that these efforts are left...to their own initiative; technical and other services are provided with a view to encouraging and making the initiative, personal efforts and mutual assistance more effective (de Bosquet, 1965, p. 64).

<sup>2</sup> Known today as the City of Montreal Police Department (SVP), following the municipal mergers.

<sup>3</sup> A guide for inter-sectorial action aimed at preventing the gang phenomenon (Hamel, Cousineau, & Vézina, avec la participation de Léveillé, 2007) was developed in the report. It represents a plain-language version of the report to help those interested in developing similar interventions. It provides tools that are adaptable to local situations where similar problems and limited resources can be found.

## References

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Cloward, R. A., & Ohlin, L. (1960). *Delinquency and opportunity: A theory of delinquent gangs*. New York: The Free Press.

Cohen, A. K. (1955). *Delinquent boys: The culture of the gang*. Glencoe, NY: The Free Press.

Conseil de la santé et du bien-être du Québec (Québec Council on Health and Welfare). (2001, novembre/November). *Les enjeux de l'évaluation des projets de développement social et de développement des communautés: perspectives diverses*. Allocution présentée dans le cadre du Colloque de l'Association pour la santé publique du Québec sur le développement social et des communautés, Montréal: *acteurs ou spectateurs? [Issues related to the evaluation of social development and community development projects: Differing viewpoints]*. Presentation to the Quebec Public Health Association colloquium on social development and communities, Montréal: *Actors or spectators?*

Covey, H. C., Menard, S. W., & Franzese, R. J. (1992). *Juvenile gangs*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

Dallaire, N. (1998). Enjeux et voies d'avenir de la promotion/prévention dans la configuration socio-économique actuelle. Université de Montréal, Sciences Humaines Appliquées, École de service social. Thèse de doctorat. [*Issues and opportunities for promotion/prevention in the current socio-economic context*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation in Applied Humanities, University of Montréal, School of Social Work.]

de Bousquet, M.-H. (1965). *Le service social* [The social service]. (Que sais-je?, no. 1173). Paris: Presses universitaires de France.

Dubet, F. (1994). *Sociologie de l'expérience* [Sociology of Experience]. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.

Hamel, S., Cousineau M.-M., & Vézina, M. (avec la collaboration de Léveillé, S.) (2007). Guide d'action intersectorielle pour la prévention du phénomène des gangs [A guide for inter-sectorial action aimed at preventing the gang phenomenon]. Montréal: Institut de recherche pour le développement social des jeunes (ce document peut être téléchargé gratuitement à partir du site de l'IRDS <http://www.irds.ca>).

Hamel, S., Cousineau M.-M., & Vézina, M. (2006). *Jeunesse et gangs de rue: Évaluation d'un projet d'action intersectorielle pour la prévention du phénomène des gangs*. Rapport déposé au Centre national de prévention du crime. Montréal: Institut de recherche pour le développement social des jeunes. (Research Institute for the Social Development of Youth).

Hamel, S., Fredette, C., Blais, M.-F., & Bertot, J. (1998). *Jeunesse et gangs de rue, phase II: résultats de la recherche-terrain et proposition d'un plan stratégique quinquennal*. Rapport présenté au Service de police de la communauté urbaine de Montréal. [*Youth and street gangs, Phase II: Results of field research and proposal for a five-year strategic plan*. Report presented to the Montreal Urban Community Police Department]. Montréal: Institut de recherche pour le développement social des jeunes (Research Institute for the Social Development of Youth).

Hawkins, J. D., Catalano, R. F., & Hawkins, J. (1992). *Communities that care: Action for drug abuse prevention*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Hébert, J., Hamel, S., & Savoie, G. J. (1997). *Jeunesse et gangs de rue, phase I: revue de littérature*. Rapport présenté au Service de police de la communauté urbaine de Montréal. [*Youth and street gangs, Phase I: Literature review*. Report presented to the Montreal Urban Community Police Department]. Montréal: Institut de recherche pour le développement social des jeunes (Research Institute for the Social Development of Youth).

Howell, J. C. (2000). *Youth gang programs and strategies*. (Bulletin, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

LeBlanc, M. (1991). Violences, bandes, minorités ethniques et réadaptation des jeunes délinquants. [Violence, gangs, ethnic minorities and the readaptation of young delinquents]. *Revue Canadienne de psychoéducation*, 292, 139-150.

Maslow, A. H. (1973). *Dominance, self-esteem, self-actualization: Germinal papers*. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.

McKinney, K. C. (1988). *Juvenile gangs: Crime and drug trafficking*. (Bulletin, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

Moore, J. W., & Garcia, R. (1978). *Homeboys: Gangs, drugs, and prison in the barrios of Los Angeles*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Spergel, I. A. (1995). *The youth gang problem: A community approach*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Thornberry, T. P. (1998). Membership in youth gangs and involvement in serious and violent offending. In R. Loeber & D. P. Farrington (Eds.), *Serious and violent juvenile offenders* (pp. 147-166). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Touraine, A. (1992). *Critique de la modernité* [A critique of modernism]. Paris: A. Fayard.

Vigil, J. D. (1988). *Barrio gangs: Street life and identity in southern California*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.



## EPILOGUE

# CRIME PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY SAFETY: SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Michel Vallée and Tullio Caputo, Editors

A wide range of issues related to the safety, health, and well-being of children and youth are explored by the chapters in this volume. They include the views of researchers and academics from various disciplines who bring a great deal of passion and commitment to their work. Surprisingly, though the authors come from different disciplines and consequently employ diverse terms and concepts, they share numerous similarities. For example, it is clear from these chapters that an ongoing focus on children and youth in Canada is reflected in the types of policies and programs that can be found in the different fields represented here. In the case of crime prevention, children and youth are often the focus of policies and programs, as well as community-based interventions. The views collected here promote the idea that policies and interventions should be more sensitive to the diversity and particularities of children's everyday lives. Many of the authors argue that problems associated with current universal conceptions of childhood have to be avoided if we are to develop more flexible and child-sensitive policies and programs in the future. Part of this discussion includes a recognition, widely shared among the contributors to this collection, that children in our society occupy a marginal position often lacking power and voice. The challenges and consequences of such a position are amplified in the case of poor, Aboriginal, and other minority youth. For ameliorative action to occur, this marginalization and inequality has to be addressed.

Like notions of childhood, the authors carefully scrutinize the concept of community in this volume. While many hold high expectations for community-based interventions, the concept itself is often problematic. It is ambiguous and poorly conceptualized and the tendency is to invoke the notion of community as a panacea – a solution to all problems of contemporary society. It is clear from the analyses presented here, that “community” is neither a panacea nor an automatic site for effective intervention. The authors of this collection rightly examine the potential offered by the concept of community and encourage a careful consideration of the role of this concept in the lives of children and youth.

The focus on community safety and crime prevention highlights a number of challenges faced by policy-makers, researchers, and those working in communities. First, there is evidence that some crime prevention strategies do work. Indeed, a body of empirical evidence is building up and this should form the basis for future strategies. It is also clear that the police in Canada play a central role in crime prevention activities, especially in relation to the safety and well-being of children and youth. The contributors to this volume, however, note that the police cannot and should not act alone in this

effort. Indeed, many authors noted the importance of partnerships at the community level and the need to involve children and youth in a meaningful way. The need for comprehensive policies and programs sensitive to diversity was reiterated in the context of community-based crime prevention initiatives. Such initiatives should reflect the changing social and political realities including the changing needs of young people.

With respect to the existing responses of the various institutions in this country to children and youth, much needs to be done. It was noted time and again that young people face systemic barriers in general and that some young people are especially marginalized by the existing institutional order. Particular attention should be paid to the needs of a diverse population of young people. Their issues and concerns should not be obscured or overshadowed by those of adults, families, or communities. Instead, institutions and organizations should promote flexible and comprehensive strategies that recognize and even celebrate the diversity in the youth population. A holistic and multidisciplinary approach should be fundamental here.

It is clear from the analyses presented in this collection that policy-making and program development for children and youth should be based on empirical evidence. A number of chapters note the importance of evidence-based decision-making, notwithstanding the lack of such an approach in areas like community safety and crime prevention. At the same time, both theoretical and methodological issues related to producing evidence-based results need to be addressed. In particular, the authors emphasize appropriate methodologies for including young people in the research process and most of the chapters in this collection discuss the need for a comprehensive approach, one that includes the involvement of key stakeholders in the research process. Children and youth *are* key stakeholders.

It is evident that an exchange of ideas among policy-makers and researchers is essential. This project began with the notion of promoting an ongoing dialogue among policy-makers and researchers. While the focus was community safety, health, and well-being for Canadian children and youth, the outcome was a far more thoroughgoing engagement with basic issues of citizenship and social justice. Importantly, these issues emerged by applying an analytical lens that reflected the experiences children and youth. While the analyses presented in this collection indicate that much needs to be done, they also provide a direction that will help us move forward toward a safer and healthier environment for young people.



